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RELIGION AND TO-DAY

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BY

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PREFACE

THESE pages are written in the belief that religion is the heart of things, and that all the research, all the new light of to-day yields that as its verdict. To reach that assurance for ourselves, however, requires a world-view, and it is precisely this which our day is securing for us. We are studying religion in the religions. We are discovering, amid all their divergencies, the thing they have in common. We find their origin in the soul, in its structure, and in its impact upon life. All revelation lies there, and we have abundant reasons for believing that, substantially, the revelation it offers is true.

Religion was never more compelling in its interest than to-day. This partly because so much of what hitherto has gone under its name has been called in question. But also, and perhaps more, because the need of it has never been more felt. All over Europe, all over the civilised world, the sense is growing that the other solutions are inadequate ; they fail to meet man's central want. The world becomes rich ; but millionairism fails to satisfy even the millionaires. Our machinery is wonderful, but it does not manufacture happiness. The electric torch of science casts no light on the final mysteries. Everywhere we hear the same cry. The most doubting nations utter it. In Germany, Eucken exposes the bankruptcy of materialism as a gospel. In France, Bergson and Boutroux use the latest science to show how matter and force fail to account for life.

Preface

We are beginning to realise personality as the soul of things, as the one reason for things. Religion has reached us through the great personalities. Christianity is a religion of personalities; and it holds its place as having in its Founder the deepest rooted of all the souls we know; the one whose character, teachings, and work reach farthest and highest, "our divinest symbol" as Carlyle has it, the incarnation of all that is to us dearest and holiest. But Christianity to-day does not stand as denying or excluding the Divine culture of man outside its immediate range. It stands rather as fulfilling and completing it. Its relation to other religions has never been better expressed than in the words of the late M. Sabatier, of Paris. "The Christian consciousness is not merely an accidental form or part of the general religious consciousness. It is with the final term of this ideal as with the summit of a mountain. The summit is a part of the mountain, but it dominates all the other parts, in their ascending stage from the depths of the valley up to itself; and by that fact it embraces them all, and assigns to each its place and rank in the whole."

The following chapters deal, as will be seen, with varied aspects of the central theme. They are an endeavour to answer some of the questions which the mind of to-day is putting to religion. They are suggestive rather than exhaustive. They will serve, at least, it is hoped, to indicate the road along which religious thought is travelling, and to offer glimpses of the goal toward which it moves.

J. B.

London, *September*, 1913.

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RELIGION AND TO-DAY

I

WILL SCIENCE REPLACE RELIGION?

An article appeared in a recent number of the *Forum* in which the writer, Dr. F. B. Hellems, offers himself as the prophet of a new evangel. He proposes science as the saviour whose "Come unto me" will draw to it the future generations. In science we shall find the solution of the human enigma; the bearer of our burdens; the giver, in full, of the satisfactions which the old religions have failed to secure. "Come unto me, and for your need of an Omnipotent Kindness to save you from sin and shame I will teach you the beauty and dignity of human nature." Dr. Hellems considers that want and hunger have in the past had largely to do with the appeal to supernatural aid. "But," he asks, "what if Poverty should be driven from his lordship, and King Hunger should be destroyed?" When science has completed its work, not only will the physical needs be satisfied, but art and beauty will come into their kingdom. Man will find in a new *régime* all he needs for happiness. He concedes there may be a realm of things behind.

"A future state, a purely spiritual world—in short, the universe of the unseen and transcendent may all be there; but we can know our duty and live our life without the help of voices heard so faintly that we cannot be sure whether they belong to truth or to hope." "When all is known, the City of God can be none other than the city of man."

This is a very interesting utterance, and the more so as it is the frank declaration of much that is passing in the mind of our time. It is a challenge that is worth our best attention. There is no doubt that science has made vast inroads into what was once regarded as the territory of religion. It has upset much that was previously held as matter of faith. The discoveries of Copernicus not only destroyed the Ptolemaic astronomy; they shook down the cosmogony which Christianity had held as part of its world-system. If the earth was not the centre of things, where or what were heaven and hell? Evolution has cleared out the old conception of creation, and turned the story of Genesis into a legend. It has made us think of the world as at its beginning rather than as close to its end. Science, as applied to Biblical criticism, has dealt fatal blows to the doctrine of an infallible inspiration; has resolved the book into its parts, and assigned to those parts vastly differing values. And the advances which science has made in the region of discovery, of the harnessing of the elemental powers to the human service, open up illimitable prospects. One may well believe in the elimination of poverty; in immeasurable additions to the security and comfort of life. Does this mean the approaching elimination of religion, and its replacement by science?

For an answer we must find out what we mean by science, and, above all, what we mean by religion. The contention that we should do better without religion than with it is a very old one, and nothing is more interesting, more suggestive, than the story of that contention. Lucretius, in his *De Rerum*

Natura, voiced it for the Romans, where he pictures religion, whose monstrous head, *horribile aspectu*, shows itself from the heavens, threatening the human race. Men are made miserable, he says, by the fear of the future, by the dread of the torments which their religious creed announces. Let them get rid of that, and all will be well. But before Lucretius, in the era of the intellectual splendour of Greece, there had been a more pronounced, a more reasoned insurgence. It is impossible to read the "Prometheus" of Æschylus without seeing in it a veiled attack upon the popular religion. The victim, chained to his rock by the order of the gods, denounces the authors of his punishment. He is there because of his labours for humanity. He roused them from ignorance.

"Before me they looked but saw not; they heard but understood not; they knew not how to use bricks or timber to construct their homes; they worked by chance and without reflection. I taught them the rising and setting of the stars; I invented for them the science of numbers; I taught them letters; the use of navigation, the use of music. . . My industry has created everything for mortal man, and my reward is this pitiless punishment!"

Who does not see here, reading between the lines, the poet's meaning! It is the revolt of science, of civilisation against the religious prejudices which were hindering its progress. The old religion was against the advancing enlightenment; the old religion, which was afterwards to make Socrates its Prometheus, to put to death for atheism the devoutest man in Greece. And after Æschylus we have Euripides. In his day free thought had gone further than with the older poet. He boldly attacks the old religion,

and charges its gods with licentiousness and crime. In the "Hercules" he declares, "These gods have contracted unions among themselves which all our laws repudiate." And in "Iphigenia in Aulis" he declares that the legends of the popular divinities are simply stories of human crime which have been transferred to the gods. Says Iphigenia:

"The inhabitants of this country, habituated to the shedding of blood, have thrown upon the gods their inhuman customs; for a divinity cannot do evil."

Here we see a revolt in full progress of the scientific mind of the time against the current religion. But observe what it amounted to. Lucretius was, of the ancients, perhaps the nearest approach to the modern materialist. And his career, which, if report speaks truly, ended in suicide, was hardly a recommendation as a creed of the highest living. But Lucretius in his onslaught was only attacking, what to-day we should all attack, a dark and barbarous belief; the idea of a cruel and vengeful Power behind the scenes, who was prepared to plunge men, after death, into the torture of Tartarus. It is an attack, not on religion as the best minds conceive it, but on a bad religion, of which there have been so many. Of the Greeks we can speak more confidently. The efforts of the great dramatists, and of the great philosophers whose belief they expounded, were directed not to the extirpation of religion, but to the purifying, the elevation of it. Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides are against a licentious divinity —a divinity which forced men to hideous crimes and then set the furies after them to harass their victims for deeds of their own inspiration. With this they teach a divinity whose supreme power is based

on righteousness. It is the setting of a noble theology against a barbarous, ignoble one ; the better thought of a more enlightened time against the creed of a savager age. Socrates was put to death on a charge of heterodoxy. But what a heterodoxy it was ; a heterodoxy which placed the soul's inner welfare above all earthly things, which was taught him by what he held to be a divine inspiration ; which treated of the joy in God, of the supremacy of virtue, of a blessed immortality ! These finest minds of Greece—we may say the finest minds of all time—were bent on the purification of religion. Assuredly they had not thought of superseding it.

But let us come closer to this modern contention. In the pronouncement from which we have quoted science is offered to us as the all-sufficing gospel of the future, because, for one thing, it will abolish poverty, and secure for the entire race the means of comfort and luxury. It will make us rich ; and by extirpating disease will make us all strong and healthy. It is an alluring prospect, which, one hopes, may be realised. But does anyone, who has really looked into life, believe that the carrying out, to its utmost success, of a programme of this sort, will secure to man his ultimate satisfaction ? It is curious to note here that Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, began his career in the midst of these very conditions. As a royal prince he possessed everything that riches could secure. His real life started with the renunciation of them all ; with the voluntary adoption of poverty, of mendicancy. In Christendom we see Bernard, Ignatius, Loyola and multitudes of others doing precisely the same thing : renouncing the rank and wealth to which they were born, and embracing

a career of hardship and privation. So strange is human nature! To-day we have the vast spectacle of "the comfortable classes." There is a whole world of well-to-do people. For them the hunger and poverty, the abolition of which, according to our prophet, will make religion superfluous, have been non-existent. What science is to do for the race has here already been done. Has it proved for them the full, satisfying gospel of which we now hear? Old Creevey, in his gossiping papers, gives an account of a certain Lord and Lady Tankerville.

"They compose together the most striking libel on the blessings of fortune. They are rich much beyond their desires or expenditure; they have the most elevated rank of their country. I know nothing to disturb their happiness; and they are apparently the most miserable people I ever saw."

One could give a thousand similar histories from the same class.

Indeed, it is one of the funniest conceptions we have met with to suppose that human happiness is to be obtained by a supply of the bodily necessaries; by the provision of physical comfort and security. The slightest observation of human nature, wherever you take it, should convince one to the contrary. With or without the necessaries, the soul is always seeking its own peculiar satisfactions. When filled with the world's goods, it is then most convinced of their emptiness. And even without them we find it ever seeking something else as more important. Emile Souvestre, in his "Causeries," has a good remark here. He says:

"The savage of the Orinoco will go willingly without boots, but he must have his earrings; the negro of the Guinea coast does not trouble about prosperity or liberty, but he will never

give up his dances and his songs. The world is full of peoples without agriculture, without commerce or manufacture; but you will never find one without its singers, its poets."

And you will never find one without its religion. Has man, in all these ages, been so stupid as to venture so much in this region without finding anything in it that answered a need? It is precisely here, in his inmost thought, in his sense of ultimate value, in the feeling and affection of his heart, that the whole issue comes. And it is precisely here that science, with all its offers, with all it has done and can do, proves itself inadequate. For what, after all, is science? Its work is in the investigation of things and their causes. It is concerned with elements, with forces and their laws. But will the utmost knowledge of things and the laws of things ever fill the heart? Will man have met his joy when he is master here? For what has he gained? Science at its highest achievement gives him law and force; offers him himself in a lonely, voiceless world. Its instruments of research, its telescope, its crucible, reveal everything but that which he is most in search of.

For man's supreme need is companionship, the sense of personality, of something, of someone, who cares; who has love to answer his own craving for love. And it is the very leaders of science who have most keenly realised this. Says Wundt:

"Science can only indicate the path which leads to territories beyond her own, ruled by other laws than those of which her realm is subject."

The great discoverers whose researches revolutionised our cosmic thinking have been the last to find their soul's refuge in science itself. Said Kepler:

"My one desire is to find the God within, whom I find everywhere without." Copernicus on his death-bed places his whole hope in the Cross. Leibnitz, whose survey took in the whole range of the known, expresses his faith in that hymn of passionate devotion :

> "Jesu dessen Tod und Leiden
> Uns're Freud' und Leben ist!"

Michelet, the freest of free-thinkers, pours out this cry of the heart :

> "Let the sentiment of the loving Cause disappear, and it is over with me. If I have no longer the happiness of feeling the world to be loved, of feeling myself to be loved, I can no longer live. Hide me in the tomb. To the thirty sciences created yesterday add thirty more—a thousand. I want none of them. What shall I do if you have extinguished for me love?"

Victor Hugo, his great compatriot and contemporary, is with him here. "The heart," he says, "cannot err. The flesh is a dream which passes. Whoever loves knows and feels that man's refuge is not of the earth. To love is to live beyond life." Romanes, who had tried the experiment, offers his result : "The soul of man is miserable without God." Pasteur echoes the cry :

> "There are two men in each one of us ; the scientist, he who desires to rise to the knowledge of nature through observation, experiment, and reasoning ; and the man of feeling, of belief ; the man who mourns his dead children, and who cannot prove that he will see them again, but who believes that he will, and lives in that hope. . . The two domains are distinct, and woe to him who tries to let them trespass on each other."

It is here in the sheer necessities of the soul, that religion finds its *raison d'être*, its stronghold, from

which, as long as the heart of man endures, it can never be dislodged. The love that is in it, the passion in it for inner perfection, demands something outside and beyond itself, that answers to and meets it. We know all the difficulties that hedge the question of a Divine Personality. "Personal, impersonal," cries Carlyle, "who can speak of these things in the Eternal Being!" Everything there is, of course, beyond our definition. What we feel sure of is that love, purity, the sense of fellowship, as we know them, must have a cause which is adequate to their production, which knows them before we did. The naturalist searches back for beginnings of these things in their earliest known stages, in their rude beginnings in the primitive forms. But, as Aristotle long ago taught, we seek the types of things not in their beginnings, but in their full fruition; we seek the idea of the oak not in the acorn, but in the complete tree. Our highest thoughts here, and not our lowest, are nearest reality. The saint does not make himself; he is not the origin of his belief in holiness; in his aspiration towards it. The world he lives in has a world outside to which it corresponds.

The question here is not of a future life, though that question remains. When science has made men happy, and made them good, in and for the present life, as religion has made them, it will be time for it to talk. When it has supplied them with matter for rectitude outside of immediate rewards, outside of public opinion, in those regions of conduct to which the magistrate cannot penetrate, it will make offered reasons for itself, which at present it cannot claim. Matthew Arnold found the cause of the early Christian triumphs in the new, overflowing

joy of those first disciples. In an outworn, weary world they offered the spectacle of a strange, fresh, exulting happiness which astonished and overcame their fellows. That is the secret of genuine religion to-day, as it has been through the ages. The world's experience has found nothing yet equal, for its strength and joy, to the love of God, the love of Christ. Across those ages there floats to us, as we write, the strain of an old Latin hymn :

"Fac ut possim demonstrare,
Quam sit dulce te amare;
Tecum pati, tecum flere,
Tecum semper congaudere!"

(Grant that I may ever show,
How sweet this is, the love of Thee,
To suffer and to weep with Thee!
With Thee eternal joy to know!)

When science can offer to the seeking soul something as satisfying, as ennobling, as that, it will have done something more than it has yet done to replace religion.

II

RELIGION AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

We are full of controversies to-day as to what religion is, and what it is here for. A large section of the popular mind appears to be on this subject in the hazy condition of the Cambridge professor, who, on being questioned as to his ideas on the existence of God, replied that he believed "there was a sort of something." At the other extreme we have people with the clearest-cut definitions. Religion means the Church, with its authority, its ceremonies, its system of doctrine. Then there are earnest religionists who make it first and last an affair of the soul and its salvation. It is a purely spiritual business. The world is evil; to be renounced and fled from. The only allowable worldliness is other-worldliness. The text, "Our citizenship is in heaven," means for them that our concern is to be not with the place where we are, but the one we are going to. We remember a Plymouth brother who, on being asked for his vote, replied: "Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth; my interests are not there." And the salvation doctrine is undoubtedly, so far, a true doctrine. If we could get everybody's soul saved in Great Britain, if every heart in it had been brought into right relation with God and one's fellow, we should have the millennium inside of twelve months.

Let our preachers, our evangelists, strike hard at the central point. They cannot strike too hard. First things first.

But the question is not so simple as it looks. The high churchman with his creed and his churchmanship, and the revivalist with his "Believe and be saved," are making the direst of mistakes if they think religion has solved its problem by the simple adoption of their shibboleths. We are not here going to pronounce upon their respective merits further than to say that, whatever truth they may have in themselves, neither of them is adequate to the present situation; neither of them represents the whole function of religion in the world. And that, in the first place, because of the essential duality of things. We have nothing here that exists by itself, or that can go on by itself. There are no souls present to us without bodies. Religion must always be a world affair, for the simple reason that it is in a world; a world which presses on it and influences it at its every point. Let anyone forget that the supernatural is held in strict bounds by the natural and he will soon be taught his mistake. If in a revival meeting, when the spiritual fervour was at its highest pitch, someone, having closed the doors and windows, proceeded to pump carbonic acid gas into the atmosphere, where would the spiritual be then? There would speedily be no revival and no revivalists! The illustration may seem a coarse, even a brutal, one. We have never heard of an event of the kind. No; but it could happen, and with precisely that effect. And what we want to point out here is that, without any overt or conscious brutality, we have permitted a condition

of things to arise, a social, an industrial condition, which less sensationally, but not the less surely, operates to stifle and kill religion in the world; to kill it as dead as carbonic acid gas would kill that company. Whatever may be the case in other spheres, so far as this world is concerned, you can have no religion at all without concurrent physical conditions; and you will have only a maimed and contorted religion where the physical conditions are maimed and contorted ones.

The Church in our day seems at last waking up to this side of its question; but it is not nearly wide enough awake yet. It is touching it in a hesitating, fumbling kind of way, and is by no means yet aware of the dimensions of the problem; of the kind of campaign which is opening before it. It has not even in any considerable degree studied its own history—on this side of it. It has not yet dawned upon it that whatever, so far, religion has done towards saving our world, it has done it, not simply as a spiritual, but always co-equally as a social force. It is worth while, in this connection, recalling a little history. Christianity, as we know, sprang out of Judaism, and the live wire of Judaism was the teachings of the prophets. Examine them; examine Amos and Micah, Hosea and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, on to Malachi—the last of them—and you will find suprisingly little about a distant heaven. They are this-worlders, through and through. Here and now, as soon as may be, is to be the kingdom of God. And that kingdom is to consist in a right social condition. Their sermons are indictments of the people who are hindering that; indictments of priests who put ceremony before conduct; of land-

grabbers who added field to field; of luxurious wasters who revelled and rioted while the people starved. The prophets were extremely unpopular with these classes, who gave them anything but a quiet time. But that was the religion they preached; and their preaching was the great preparation for the Christian Gospel.

What was that Gospel? We are apt to think of it as a purely spiritual message; a message for the soul. Assuredly it was that; such a message as the soul had never listened to before; and which, through ages, has brought to millions of hearts priceless treasures of strength and comfort. But it is extraordinary how our modern churchgoers, with the New Testament before them, have missed that other side of the matter; have missed the significance of the primitive Church as a social movement. The early disciples believed not only in the regeneration of the individual soul, but in the regeneration of the whole world-system. And they believed that it was coming at once. Their Second Advent creed, the belief in the immediate re-coming of Christ, was at bottom a faith in a new world that was to supersede the old, bad, corrupt world. All those Apocalypses which the later Judaism had so lavishly produced, and which, remember, were a part of the furniture of the early Christian mind, were the heralds of a vast social reform movement, to be brought about by supernatural means. That these reformers, Jewish and Christian alike, were mistaken in their belief—mistaken as to the time and manner of the revolution—does not detract in the least from the quality of their idea. The point remains that religion to them held, as one of its prime factors, a social revolutionary

element. It meant a reversal of the old-world evils, a reversal of the way in which men should live and work with each other. And so far as their power extended they carried out these principles among themselves. They carried out, in an infinitely better way than the French revolutionists, the idea of "liberty, equality, fraternity." They gave up their property to a common fund; they met together in a spirit of joyous fraternity at a common table. One in heart, they felt themselves one in all that belonged to the common life.

And it is remarkable to see how, in the ages which succeeded, this social idea of religion, under varying forms, held its ground. As the great hope of an immediate world-change faded, religious men fixed their hopes more definitely on the future life as the scene where earthly inequalities and injustices would be done away. But within their own circle the best souls fought hard for the social idea. Within the Church, God's kingdom, they would at least have the right conditions. It would be a fine spiritual discipline for our modern millionaires to read the early Christian Fathers on the subject of property. There is a general consensus among them that large fortunes were a denial of God; that great personal possessions were a species of robbery. In the later, mediæval period we see the rise of the great monastic orders. Amid the awful confusions of those times spiritual men fled from the world to form these religious communities. We are apt to forget, in thinking of the monasteries, that, with all their faults as an expression of man's true life, they were nevertheless, in their internal economy, a reproduction of the early communistic idea. There the great noble and

the humble peasant met on a footing of equality. Each was known as a simple "brother." They shared the same table, they laboured at the same tasks, their wants were supplied from the common stock.

Then came the Reformation, that vast uprising of Northern Europe against the corruptions of the Papacy. It was a moral and spiritual uprising ; but let us not forget its social significance. In Germany, where the movement took its rise, there were vast elements working in it which had a quite other than supramundane tendency. Luther, in his great, really creative years, from 1516 to 1525, was regarded by the oppressed peoples as the great democrat, their own especial leader. The immediate result of his teaching was the rise of the peasants ; their demand for the restoration of their stolen rights. The peasants' revolt was at first a distinctly religious movement. In their first gatherings they listened to pious exhortations ; they marched under the banner of the Cross. It was one of the greatest disasters for Germany, and for the Reformation itself, that Luther, at the critical period, lost his nerve. He drew back, allied himself with the aristocrats and supported them in the frightful massacres which followed. The German proletariat in all the generations that followed never forgot that betrayal. To it we owe the sorrowful fact that Lutheranism, instead of being the symbol of a great social regeneration, became a mere religious sect, a sect which to-day stands for a non-progressive, hard-and-fast, State-bound ecclesiasticism ; and that to-day the German working man, regarding the national religion as part of the conspiracy to keep him down, is throughout the length and breadth of Germany a

non-religious man, educated by his leaders into a steadfast hatred of Christianity. The religious alienation of those masses is the judgment of history upon a religion which failed to recognise that one great half of its function is a social one.

Let us come to our own country. How are the social conditions in England to-day affecting its religious life ? It is time we studied that question. We are so busy asking what the Churches are doing for the social conditions that we are forgetting the other side—how the social conditions are affecting the Churches. But the urgent, the critical importance of that question has now reached a point which compels us to ask whether, if these conditions are not altered, the Church will survive. Our religious teachers go on expounding texts and theology as if these were the one thing in religion. If they would look back on our history during the last hundred years, they would see that things at the farthest remove from texts have in that period been working at the very foundations of religion and altering its entire aspect. We do not put Watt, Stephenson and Arkwright amongst our theologians, but it is they, more than all our divines, who have influenced most radically, and in some respects most fatally, our Church life. The introduction of machinery, and, with that, capitalism and landlordism, have brought about a crisis which the Church, in the interests of its own existence, has now to face. Machinery has driven the worker from his own home, where of old he used to exercise in freedom and amid healthful surroundings his industry, into huge factories and into the huge unwholesome towns which surround them. Coincident with that process

has been the action of the landowners, who, by the infamous Enclosure Acts of the Georgian and post-Georgian period, have robbed the peasant of his holdings, and either sent him to swell the town populations or to become a sort of *adscriptus glebæ*, with no rights but that of ill-paid labour, and no prospects but the workhouse. There was a time, from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries inclusive, when the English peasant had four acres of land, a fixed tenure of his cottage at a nominal rent, and rights of pasturage and wood-gathering over seven million acres of common land and open woodland. The whole of this has been taken from him ; and now, as M. de Laveleye says,

> " England, which was once of all countries of Europe the richest in men who owned and tilled their own land, is now of all countries in Europe the poorest in this class of men."

How has this condition of things related itself to religion and to Christian institutions ? Here comes in our connection between the material and the spiritual. We see how wrong material conditions may create an atmosphere approximating to the carbonic acid gas in the meeting-house. First of all, through the industrial revolution created by machinery and the legalised robbery of their landed rights, the working population has been herded in the great towns, where they work by day in heated mills and warehouses, and sleep by night in insanitary slums. The result is a stunted physique which becomes less and less equal to the enormous strain of a work system which becomes ever more speeded up. Do we expect these people to be in a mood for Sunday services, when, for their exhausted frames, that one day offers the single weekly oppor-

tunity for a breath of fresh air? The Puritans could stand a service four hours long, because they had filled their bodies and brains with God's free air for the rest of the week. We must give the people leisure and a well-nourished body if religion is with them to have a chance. The city is their great meeting-house. They cannot pray there if its atmosphere is poisoned. They must repossess the open country which they have lost, and breathe its free air, if their souls, with their bodies, are to have a chance.

Observe how in other ways our present economic condition is reacting upon religion. Our huge cities have in them a mass of people below the poverty line. Mr. Charles Booth, in his "Life and Labour in London," show how Free Church religion thrives best in the middle class districts. When a certain line of poverty has been passed the Churches lose their hold almost completely, in spite of the most heroic efforts of Christian workers. Does that mean that God's Spirit is powerless below that line? Does it not mean rather that His Spirit is by these failures calling to our notice His violated laws, and insisting on our obedience to them as the condition of His working? We are under a *régime* which is creating enormous fortunes for the few with a dead level of poverty for the many. The rich few live in one world, and the impecunious many in another. These worlds scarcely touch. If this is a right, a normal condition, then Christianity, which calls for a brotherly fellowship, a loving amity which expresses itself in a generous sharing of both the inner and the outer life, is clearly wrong. We do not think it is Christianity that is wrong, but something else.

Shall the Church acquiesce in all this ; submit to be financed by millionaires, and in return accept and preach the millionaire social view ; or will it have the wisdom to see that its finance, with every other portion of its scheme, can only be healthy as it comes from the free universal offerings of an equalised, industrious community ; none so rich as to be separated from their neighbours, none so poor as to have nothing to spare for the ideal, spiritual interests ?

What does all this point to ? Is it Socialism ? It depends what we mean by Socialism. The people who mean by it the abolition of private property, and the institution of absolute equality, are up against the primal facts of nature and life. There never has been and never will be equality, either in heaven or upon earth. And private property will never be extinguished so long as a man carries his own soul inside his own body. Surely we have not far to look for the real working, the real Christian system ? What is our family life, where it is well ordered and wholesome, but the ideal mingling of the social and the individualist principles ? There is no equality. The father is more than his children. There is no elimination of private property. The parental purse is deeper than that of the boys and girls. And yet the home is a communistic society ; a society where no one wants so long as family funds are available ; where the interest of each is the interest of all ; where the differences of age, or ability, or position, do not prevent the freest, most loving intercourse. It is a commonwealth, a Christian commonwealth, set there before us by God, the Father of all families of the earth, as the type of what our larger, national

fellowship is to be. It is the ideal which the Church, if it is to preserve itself and preserve the nation, has now to work for with the zeal of the ancient prophets, the fervour of the Christian apostles. The nation has a soul as well as the individual; and the salvation of the one, if it is to be effectual, must go hand in hand with the salvation of the other.

III

OUR DOCTRINE OF SIN

Lord Morley, in one of his essays, speaking of Emerson, says :

> " In like manner Emerson has little to say of that horrid burden and impediment on the soul which the churches call sin, and which, by whatever name we call it, is a very real catastrophe in the moral nature of man."

Emerson was a comfortable optimist, who, gifted with a sunny temperament, had an exceedingly good time in the world. He saw life on its best sides. One might compare him with Madame Récamier, of whom Sainte Beuve says : " She simply could not see evil anywhere." There are many like Emerson. Indeed, what Morley says of him might be said of our age, not excluding the Church itself. It is indeed of the Church idea and treatment of sin that we wish here to speak. Has it at present a doctrine of sin ? If so, it seems somewhat obscure, and there is great shyness in presenting it. There are reasons for this. On the one hand there is a prevailing easy sentimentalism which prefers smooth topics to rough ones. On the other, there is a reticence arising from uneasiness and mental confusion. New facts about the world and humanity have poured in which seem to contradict the old doctrine ; and the Church, caught between this clash of views, has not, on the subject, found its mind or its voice. But it

is time it did, for the theme is vital. What we think about sin has everything to do with what we think about God; everything to do with our conduct towards His creatures.

First of all, have we any valid reason for recasting the old ideas on this subject? Have we any new light? any new facts or experiences to which that earlier world, which gave us our creeds and our dogmas, had not access? Has collective humanity, grown taller, augmented its vision power so as to be able to see farther? Has there been in the interval any development of that moral faculty which is primarily concerned with the question? In a word, is our age competent to pronounce a new judgment? It would argue, surely, a false modesty to deny or even to doubt this. It is simply the first fact we encounter. Not simply is our age the one with the longest human experience behind it, but it is one in which new sciences have arisen for the study of that experience. We know, as no previous age has known, the story of human development. Geology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, have opened up hitherto undreamed-of stores of information, all bearing upon this one topic. No one, whether cleric or layman, can pronounce on it—at least with any chance of being listened to by cultivated persons—without having studied these sources and considered their verdict. But there is much more than that. In addition to what science offers, we have a new and enormously valuable contribution to the subject derived from the later practice of mankind. For sin is an affair, not of theology only, but of human conduct and misconduct. It is the thing which occupies our police courts, our prison arrangements; which has to be

guarded against and dealt with in our neighbour and in ourselves. And we are dealing with it on theories which differ from those of our fathers, and with results that are in themselves a revelation.

Our age, then, has something of its own to say on the doctrine of sin. But before inquiring what that is it may be well to remind ourselves of what the Church doctrine is on this subject, or at least what it has been. The Church postulates a fall of man in his ancestor Adam, and a thence-derived original sin which exposes him to the wrath of God. Says the Westminster Confession on this head: "By their sin they fell from their original righteousness, and so became dead in sins, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of their soul and body." Catholicism, it must be acknowledged, has not gone as far as the Protestants and Puritans in this matter. Its doctrine is of a fall and a defiling, but not of so complete a character. As St. Bernard puts it: "The fine gold has become dim, but it is still gold; the beauteous colour has faded, but it is not altogether effaced." From this ruin the elect by the operation of grace are saved from the Divine wrath; but the non-elect—or, amongst Arminians, those who refuse salvation or who fall from grace—are exposed to eternal damnation. How hopeless the outlook here is, according to both Protestant and Catholic theology, may be illustrated by two citations. The Anglican Pearson says, in his work on the Creed:

> "But in the reprobate and damned souls the spot of sin remaineth in its perfect die, the dominion of sin continueth in its absolute power; the guilt of sin abideth in a perpetual obligation to eternal pains."

What Catholics are still teaching is illustrated by

the following from Mr. E. S. Haynes's book on "Religious Persecution": "We came recently on a book by a Jesuit which informs the reader that sinners in hell have asbestos souls to ensure their burning for eternity."

It is not too much to say that these ideas have become impossible to us; impossible to our science, impossible to our moral development. We know more of the human past than did the dogma-makers of the creeds, and that knowledge does not accord with their assumptions. Darwinism is, on specific points, assailed to-day from many quarters, but the belief in a gradual, age-long development of the race from an inferior animal condition has now become practically universal. Whatever fall there has been in man's history was a fall upwards. Sin, we perceive, however terrible in itself, is a sign not so much of human ruin as of human progress. There was a time when man was not good enough to sin. An animal does not sin. A tiger may slay and devour a whole family, but we do not call it a sinner, nor does it feel like one. It was in man's climb upward, when a moral nature formed itself in him, that actions which before were sinless assumed to his dawning light another shape. It was with the infancy of the race as with our individual infant; which, born a mere bundle of sensations and appetites, arrives gradually at moralhood, where it can sin, and does. A perception of sin, we say, is an element of moral progress. There are no shadows where there is no light. It is the saints—the natures where the light shines brightest—the Pauls, the Augustines, the Bunyans, who have the vividest perception of their own and the world's evil.

It may be said here that to give the natural history of the moral sense is not to define sin or to show how it should be dealt with. You do not excuse a man's wrong use of power by showing how he came by it. Very true. And now we say: Take any definition of it you please, from metaphysics, from theology, from psychology, or from your actual experience; paint it and its consequences in the darkest colours that our knowledge of it can justify; what we now ask is, how far will this conception of sin—your own and the world's—tally with the credal conceptions we have cited, or with the popular theological ideas that have been built upon them? It will be found that our moral development, coinciding here with the revelations of science, has made them impossible. Take, for instance, the notion found in many theologies, that man's sin, since it is committed against an infinite Being, is therefore infinite, demanding infinite punishment. Can anyone to-day believe that? Surely that is to take infinity by the wrong end! If God is infinite anywhere, is He not infinite in His love? Transfer the theory to ourselves Are we to suppose that a child's punishment for its offences is to be proportionate to the superior wisdom, strength and station of its parent? Does any father reason like that? Or take again the popular theory that death alters all our relations to God; that the erring, sinful being whom His sun has shone upon and His care protected all through life will, by the mere fact of dying, face a different God, armed only with terrors and vengeance! It is as if a mother, who loves her child as long as it is awake, should turn on it the hand of a murderess the moment it falls asleep.

Our Doctrine of Sin

Sin, in a moral nature, is the same thing in England as in Australia, in one state of being as in any other, in this life or any other life. And our common-sense, still more our moral faculty, educated by the long process of the ages, educated most of all by the mind of Christ, knows only one way of dealing with it. Under that education we are giving up punishment, the infliction of suffering, as an end in itself. Our first instinct towards evil-doers is an instinct of reform. Gone are the days when young people for their first offence were hanged in batches at Newgate. We invade our criminal districts with missionaries, with schools, with Barnardo agencies, with methods of rescue and reclamation. We believe in the salvability of our worst human material, and work for it. And the results prove the value of the method. To hate a man, to pursue him with vengeance because he has sinned against us or the community is, we instinctively feel, a lowering of our own nature, a sin against him and against the Highest. We inflict suffering in the belief of its salutary quality, and accept the world's suffering as, in mysterious ways, working towards a salutary, saving end—the belief which was hammered into poor Oscar Wilde, of which he speaks in his "De Profundis": "Now it seems to me that love of some kind is the only possible explanation of the extraordinary amount of suffering that there is in the world."

In this belief we select men of high character as governors of our prisons, and seek to make these places, as far as possible, reformatories. In this connection one cannot but note the extraordinary confusion of ideas which, in current theology, makes

God, in His dealing with sinful souls beyond the grave, elect as their governor a supposed invincible rebel against Himself, the worst character in the universe! Surely it is time we dismissed from our thoughts these barbarities of an ignorant age; that we ceased to insult the Eternal Love and Wisdom by attributing to it cruelties and stupidities that would not be tolerated for a moment amongst ourselves!

These thoughts, which the moral consciousness of our time has pressed to the front, have been at the back of the brains of the best people in all ages. To the mighty intellect of Aristotle evil had no independent existence. It was to him a privation, an abatement of the good, a depreciation of excellence. His idea corresponded to that contained in the New Testament word for sin—*hamartia*, literally "a missing of the mark." Augustine, when he ceases to be theological and becomes simply Christian, thinks in the same way. "God," says he, "deemed it better to do good with evil, rather than not to permit evil at all." And again, "If it were not good that there should be evil, evil would in no wise have been permitted by Omnipotent Goodness." To this let us add that word of his in "De Trinitate," where, speaking of the sacrifice of Christ, he says: "Would the Father have delivered up His Son for us if He had not been already appeased? I see that the Father loved us before the Son died for us." The mystics in every age have believed in the all-conquering love of God. Take this word of that lovely saint of the fourteenth century, the anchoress Julian of Norwich.

"For I saw no manner of wrath in God, whether for short time or for long. . . For God is all that is good

to my sight, and God loveth all that He hath made. For in mankind that is to be saved is comprehended all—that is to say, all that is made. . . For in man is God and God is in all."

To the same effect is the testimony of that noble early Baptist, John Smyth, who says in his "Long Confession": "As no man begetteth his child to the gallows, nor no potter maketh a pot to break it, so God doth not predestinate any man to destruction." The instinct to save men, which the Christ-spirit has implanted in us, compels us to believe in God's instinct.

The doctrine we here preach is essentially that of Christianity; is that of its entire spirit and method; is the only one that can be deduced from it. Christ's way with sinners was to love them, to believe in their recoverability. He tackled the outcasts as an object-lesson in the possibilities of a loved humanity. To preach His Gospel to men is to announce your faith in a Divine something in them which will respond to this Divine something you bring to them. It is this spirit which makes Christianity the most daring of optimisms; which puts it into magnificent contrast with the fatalism of the East and the fatalism of the West. While Schopenhauer declares you can no more change the character of a bad man than the character of a tiger; while Nietzsche sneers at the weak and exalts force and repression, the Gospel goes on hoping and goes on saving. Sin is the old part of a man, the animal part of him, the reminiscence of the slime out of which he has risen. And the spiritual is the new part of him; the Divine part which is slowly filtering into him as his faculties are prepared for its reception; the part

which, as yet, has only begun its history, but which is destined to fill it in the time to come.

This doctrine of sin is the only one that works in our own daily contact with life and with our fellows. You do no good by hammering at the evil in humanity, whether the humanity is in your own household or outside. You can hit back at your man, and then, in the sum of the day's actions, there has been your insult or wrong added to his. Christ has taught us the folly of all this; nay, the best men had learned it before. We read of Lycurgus that when his eye had been put out by an enemy, he got the man into his power, but instead of taking revenge on him (Origen tells the story) "he ceased not to use all his arts of persuasion until he induced him to become a philosopher." That was Christianity before Christ, the one and only sane way of dealing with evil.

It is the way of trust, of trust in the eternity of goodness, of its all-conquering power. "Trust the people," said Gladstone, and the word was the introduction of Christianity into politics. Under that influence we shall learn to trust not only our own people, but all other peoples; to trust the French, the Germans, the Russians, the Chinese. And they will return the trust. The rise of that spirit will be the death of armaments, the death of wars. William Penn trusted the Indians, and they hurt neither a hair of his head nor a stone of his property. You may trust goodness as you trust radium or oxygen. More, for these may change, but this is eternal.

And if we trust goodness in men shall we distrust the goodness in God? Think of religious schemes,

ceremonials, theological contrivances to save men from God! As if the one thing wanted were not to open His approach to us, to let in the full current of His love! The want of the age is a new faith in God; a faith in Him for ourselves and our neighbour; a faith which covers his and our affairs for to-day; his and our affairs for time and for eternity.

IV

UNSPOKEN ARGUMENTS

The world has been arguing ever since it was a world, and its appetite appears to grow with the exercise. It has elaborated a great science of argument. The libraries are full of books on the subject. You stumble through Aristotle—his categories and his definitions. Hegel, in the "Logik," gives you one impossible chapter after another in the implications contained in the proposition "A is A." Mill, in his remorseless analysis of common terms, infects you with his own despair of language as an instrument of clear thinking. Whately, in that logic-manual of his which Newman so cruelly described as excellent in everything except in its absence of logic, dishes up for you all the ancient science of the theme; puts you through "Barbara, Celarent"; the syllogism, the fallacies, and all the rest of it. Let us hope the business has not been for you an entirely useless one. It will at least have filled you with a high-sounding vocabulary. And on occasion you will, perhaps, be able by its aid to bemuddle your neighbour as effectually as you have been bemuddled yourself. "Logic is logic," as Wendell Holmes says in the "One Hoss Shay." Only, the real thing existed long before the logic books. Your dog, who has never read them, will draw some inferences a great deal better than you. Lord Avebury's ants, who

know nothing of "sorites," or of middle-term fallacies, will, without saying anything about it, proceed quite as logically as you can, from certain conditions to certain results. The capital distinction in arguments is one not given in the manuals. It is that between the spoken ones and the unspoken ones. The first are those which bulk in our philosophies, our theologies; which reverberate in pulpits, on platforms, in legislatures, and law courts. The last lie silent, uttering no word; yet so eloquent in their silence, so all-conquering in their appeal; for they are the only real ones.

Argument, in the common use of the word, is what we say about things. What really matters is what they say about themselves. And their silent testimony is so continually confounding our noisy affirmations about them. There is a grim humour in their procedure. They permit us to weave our fine-spun theories, to become eloquently dogmatic, even persecuting, in defence of our theory. Meanwhile they lie there, uttering no word, biding their time. Finally some illuminated mind, also of the silent order, comes and looks them in the face, catches their real meaning, and then, alas for the theory, and all that has been built upon it! So fared it with the old theologic fancies about creation and the story of the earth. We were brought up on the doctrine of a world manufactured in six days, by successive feats, a miraculous business of some six or seven thousand years ago. Our Bible headings still put the date of creation at B.C. 4004. Meantime the old earth itself believed nothing of the kind, but offered no audible observations on the subject. It was content to lie there, with its rock strata, its

coal formations, its chalk beds, its ocean floor, all crammed with evidence to the contrary. It lay there waiting till men opened their eyes, to spell the alphabet of its message. Here in England, in our generation, men began to study the white cliffs that give our island the name of Albion ; the chalk which lies across the land from Dorsetshire to Flamborough Head in Yorkshire ; which underlies great parts of France and central Europe, right into Africa, into central Asia. They studied its formation : found it to be composed in large part of the remains of tiny microscopic, once living forms, the Globigerinæ ; forms which in a living state now cover the deep bed of the Atlantic, and are there, to-day, undergoing the very process which made our cliffs and formed our chalk beds. By studying the rate at which the process goes on in the Atlantic depths, we gain some idea of the immense period required to construct those chalk beds, sometimes a thousand feet thick, which underlie our country side. It is a period which requires considerably more figures than the 4004 B.C. of our Bible headings ! And the chalk story is only the merest fragment of that unspoken argument which our earth has all this time contained within itself, concerning its vast antiquity ; concerning the age-long process by which its life, vegetable, animal, human, has reached its present stage.

We have referred to the Bible. Here, also, we have the same story. Our childhood was reared in a doctrine of the Bible which declared it to be, from beginning to end, an infallible record, every word supernaturally dictated, every statement of it on the same level of truth and holiness. It was, in the strictest sense, the work of one Author, the human

agents concerned being merely amanuenses, writing from the Divine dictation. Meanwhile through the ages the Book lay there, with all its facts imbedded, as the fossils lay imbedded in the rock strata, waiting, as they did, for the human mind to wake to their meaning. On the one side, all the logic and rhetoric of the dogmatists; on the other the facts themselves—the spoken against the unspoken argument. We know now which side has had the better of the contest. Since Astruc, the French physician, discovered the varied sources of the Genesis narrative, the Book has been telling us its own story. There it lies before us; the contributions of the Elohist and the Jehovist, so different in style, in point of view; the later work of the Deuteronomist, and the priestly revisions of the post-exilic period. We have the evidence of the Book of Judges lying over against the idealist creations of Leviticus and Numbers; the sober accounts of Kings as against the exaggerations of Chronicles. In these differences and contradictions; in this placing, side by side, of vastly varying moral levels, and of the sentiments which arise out of them; in the whole vast accumulation of facts concerning itself which it offers, we have that array of unspoken arguments by which, as against the old dogma, the Book exhibits its real character; shows itself as the Book of God and man; of God lifting man from stage to stage of character, of insight; of man, opening his mind and soul to this gracious education, expressing in a myriad varied ways the truth he has reached, the strength which has come to him. To-day we know the Bible, as we know the earth we tread on, not according to the loud-voiced arguments of the early *doctrinaires*,

but according to the silent testimony of its own contents.

It is always the unspoken argument that really moves us. There have been volumes written, from various standpoints, on the care and upbringing of children. We discuss to-day hygienics ; we reckon up the economic value of a child. Religion speaks with its greatest power in exalting the value and beauty of love as exhibited in the home affections. We have eloquent dissertations on the maintenance of the family life as an essential to the moral strength of a nation. All this is excellent in its kind. But are these the arguments which hold with a mother as she clasps her babe in her arms ? What plea is comparable to the silent one which speaks in that innocence, in that utter helplessness, in the trust which turns those new-opened eyes to her as the all-sufficient nourisher and guardian ?

And this argument, which nature writes deep in a child's form and lineaments, remains there in all its progress from infancy to maturity. But the logic becomes subtler, deeper, with more implications. A man carries in his face the argument of his life. We hear to-day of specialists in face-architecture ; beauty doctors, experts in washes and cosmetics, who will clarify your skin, remove its wrinkles, give to your nose the fashionable angle—procure you, in short, a new face for money. 'Tis a stucco business at best, at which nature, the true artist, silently laughs. The face made in Bond Street does not wear well. Ladies' maids, who see it of mornings, have their opinion on it. Meantime, in high disdain of this kind of performance, there is going on another process, the process of spiritual law.

The artists here are hidden in the soul. They work with the surest of touches, which none can mistake. Their materials are the character, the thought, the daily deed of the man himself. They catch his portrait and paint it on his features. There, on those few inches of surface, lies his life record. There is no contradiction of it possible. High thoughts, noble impulses, clean actions work themselves into those inches, filling them with their own quality. Baseness, too, of all sorts sets here its image and superscription. How searching is that word of Emerson: "What you are stands over you and speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying to the contrary."

We heard the other day of a Baptist working man, esteemed by all who knew him for the purity and elevation of his character, who died of a painful disease. In his last moments his face became suddenly irradiated. "What is it you see?" asked his wife. "It must be heaven," he replied. "I see angels, the most glorious, beautiful things." And with that light on his face he passed away. "Purely subjective, of course," says the critic; "an affair of his theological prepossessions, an exhibition of his pre-existing mental furniture." Take it even at that lowest level, does it not suggest something? That a soul, in a body dying of torturing pains, finds its last earthly moment a triumph scene of gladness, its vision fed with a sense of glorious beauty; is there not here an unspoken argument for the life of faith deeper than all our philosophy, more eloquent than all our eloquence?

The real argument for religion all through is an unspoken argument. The one damnable hetero-

doxy is a heterodoxy of life. So long as we are not doing God's will we shall have no doctrine of Him that is worth propagating. The Church that is manned with people of Christ's temper, whenever we get it, will be the one that will know and use His power to save. And that whatever its speculative views. We say here, with Fichte, that most unorthodox Christian, according to the conventional standards :

"Could Jesus return into the world we might expect Him to be thoroughly satisfied if He found Christianity actually reigning in the minds of men, whether His merit in the work were recognised or overlooked. . . This indeed is the very least that might be expected in One who, while He lived on earth, sought not His own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Him."

It was precisely this unspoken argument of character and life that gave to early Christianity its conquering power ; that made possible the testimony about Christians in that most exquisite of early Christian writings, the Epistle to Diognetus " :

"For Christians are in the world what the soul is to the body. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through all the divers cities of the world. The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet itself holdeth the body together. So Christians are kept in the world as in a prison-house, and yet they themselves hold the world together."

The effective doctrines of Christianity are really the unspoken ones. There have been almost countless theologic interpretations of the death of Christ. For a thousand years the doctrine ruled in the Church that it was a ransom price paid to the devil. Then came Anselm's famous "Cur Deus Homo," with the argument that the death was exacted as a satisfaction to God's wounded honour. Anyone who, for

his sins, has had to work his way through the Reformation and post-Reformation theologies, and has followed that purgatorial process by a study of modern atonement theories, knows, as perhaps does no one else, the stupendous tangle which theology has contrived to make of this central theme. At the end of it all we find ourselves in a sort of Sargasso sea, where opposing currents, carrying with them their separate burdens of slime and weed, make an impenetrable floating morass in which your vessel can move neither back nor forward. We turn our eyes from this swamp-morass of opinion to the cross itself. It stands there, upreared amid the world tumult, the theologic tumult, so divinely silent, so divinely impressive. It speaks no word. The Divine Sufferer stretched upon it offers no theologic explanations. His few sentences are just the notes of a great, loving, broken heart. The silent argument of that tree of pain will outlive all the theories hung upon it. It goes deeper. It is the argument of suffering, redeeming love ; the love that sacrificed ; that gave up all for love of all ; that saved others and could not save itself. Before that symbol the highest minds bow their heads and bare their hearts ; before it untutored men who know nothing of the schools have found their judgment and their comfort. For ever does that silent cross carry on its argument ; the deepest word that God has spoken ; the greatest sign humanity has lifted to the heavens.

It is by the unspoken argument that Christianity is being steadily purified of all its incongruous and foreign adhesions. Time, the silent one, is continually disapproving the falsities that have crept into

its systems and weakened its influence. Time, in saying nothing, says so much. By its sheer movement it has disproved the early notion of an immediate second advent and world end. The same movement has been the death blow to so many confident prophets and prophecies. And the silent earth, in opening its secrets, has in like manner disposed of the cosmogonies and wrongly drawn world schemes which formed so large a part of the early Church belief. That process will continue until religion, standing simply for its own essential truth and life, divested of all that science and criticism can assail, will wield over the whole field of affairs, with unrestricted sweep, its one irresistible weapon, the sword of the Spirit.

Whatever we make of the book-logic and the book-rhetoric, the main thing for us is to keep the mind open to the unspoken arguments. Above the din and whirl of our controversies, let us, if we value our souls, never lose the voiceless messages. Life, time, death, eternity, the very make of our being, with its struggle, its insight, its ceaseless aspiration, all these contain the supreme logic ; the logic which, as we use it, will prove us finally right or wrong. The heart's reasons are the final ones.

" If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice ' believe no more '
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd ' I have felt.' "

V

OPPOSITES IN RELIGION

If you thrust a stick into water your eye is met by what to the unsophisticated is a puzzling phenomenon. Your stick, which is straight before you put it into the water, now appears bent as you look at it from above. We know, of course, that this is simply a trick which light plays us, acting on the differing media of air and of water. The refracting effect of water, in which our stick is immersed, differs from that of the air in which we see the part of it which is above. The stick is really straight all along. But it refuses to appear straight so long as we keep it immersed in that lower, denser medium. You could, if you chose, have other experiments, with even quainter results. By a proper arrangement of your media, and of your reflecting surfaces, you could see two sticks or more instead of one, and these pointing in different directions.

These simple truths of physics have analogues in other and deeper things. As we study the bewildering puzzles, the seeming flat contradictions which encounter us in life—especially the inner life, and the religious faith which ministers to it—we ask ourselves whether it may not be that our difficulties here are, after all, of the bent stick order ; whether our bent stick may not be actually a straight one ; whether the two, pointing apparently in different directions,

are not really one, with the same real inclination; whether the seeming oppositions and contradictions of our life may not be an affair of the medium we see them in, and not of the actual fact. Religion, as we know it—and the thing is true of all the great religions of the world—is throughout an affair of opposites. You have the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness; Ormuzd and Ahriman, God and the Devil; heaven and hell. Painted in on this tremendous background we have man's condition and struggle, sketched on the same antithetic method. We have sin and grace, law and Gospel, saints and sinners, flesh and spirit, Church and world, the city of destruction, the City of God. And it would betoken a very superficial mind to treat these oppositions as light matters, as mere illusions; as representing anything less than grand and august realities. They have from the beginning been prime agents in man's inner education; they have been the mainspring of his greatest spiritual activities; their vivid presentation, by the great religious leaders and preachers, has converted millions of men, founded Churches, inspired to heroic and world-redeeming enterprises. They are realities, we say; but the question here is what kind of realities, and how are they related to other realities that lie behind? The water medium, through which we see the stick as bent, is, let us remember, a reality, and must not be treated as anything else. Only, in order to arrive at the whole truth about it, we have to connect it with other realities that lie behind, and without the knowledge of which we shall fall into grievous errors. And, in the region of moral and religious truth, the question,

we repeat, arises, whether the great oppositions we have spoken of are not, after all, projections, pointing, as it seems, in different directions, yet with an interior relation—a relation to a great hinterland of higher truth in which they all find an abiding unity.

We are helped towards this view by what we find in nature. In the early world primitive man was confronted by what seemed to him a warfare of opposites. The course of the year brought him the great antithesis of winter and summer—the reign of fierce rigours, the reign of warm beneficence. One day gave him a cloudless sky, the sun shining in his strength. Another brought whirling tempests, the storm cloud, the lightning's flash, the thunder's roar. There were things that helped his life ; others that wrought death. By the side of fruits that fed were poisons that killed. How natural for him to suppose that here was the work of opposing powers, one his friend and the other his foe ! How natural that his imagination, working on these facts, should create for him a literature, a religion, which divided for him his universe into a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness, ruled over respectively by an Ormuzd and an Ahriman, a Power of goodness and a Power of evil ! Our modern science has, at least in the physical sphere, corrected this world-view. The opposites are there, sure enough, and there to be reckoned with. But we have discovered behind them an essential unity. Summer and winter, light and darkness, storm and calm, are parts of the one process. We trace back their effects to the working of the same central force—a force which has no ill-humours and no maleficences ; which works always for our good, in proportion as

we understand and obey it. In this region of nature-phenomena we have learned our lesson of the water-medium—we have found out what the bent stick really amounts to.

Have we, then, we must now ask, anything similar to learn in matters of the spiritual life; and especially as these are offered to us in the great doctrines of the Christian Gospel? We say, unquestionably yes; and more, that it is only as we use this clue that we shall come to any proper understanding of our New Testament, any proper use of it for our own time. We have to remember, in the first place, that the Gospel teaching is offered us in a medium, the medium of the current ideas, of the current language, of the current ways both of thought and expression, of the people to whom it was first addressed. It was the only medium then possible; the only one comprehensible to them. These people were Orientals; and with Orientals, speech, especially public and hortatory speech, was, to an extent far beyond our own, an affair of imagery, of picture, of the vivid placing of opposites carried to the point of rhetorical exaggeration. And the Master Himself does not disdain this method; in fact, habitually uses it. He trusted the people to see the plain truth under the vivid metaphor. When He tells them they must take up their cross, must die to live, He does not expect them to make crucifixes, or to kill themselves. He does not hesitate at seeming contradictions. He who says it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom, is the same who commended the faith of the centurion, a man of position and property; who cordially accepted the

rich publican who, though he gave half his goods to the poor, had a very comfortable other half left for himself; whose apostle, guided by the Spirit, baptised the wealthy Ethiopian eunuch into the Christian faith. He who taught that the kingdom of God is within us; that its progress would be slow and gradual, as of a seed hidden in the earth and quietly germinating, elsewhere, in the apocalyptic passages, utters sayings which the disciples interpreted as foretelling an immediate and overwhelming manifestation of the Divine power and glory. In this last matter, indeed, we do not know how far the medium has bent the stick; how far the intense apocalyptic prepossessions of the time had, in the minds of His hearers, warped the sayings of the Master into a misconception of His real mind. The point is that His teaching throughout is in a medium where opposites and contradictions, seemingly irreconcilable, have their place; irreconcilable till we refer back to a hinterland of higher unity, where we see their hidden agreement. We are sure there is agreement. When in one place we read, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"; and in another, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," have we not here an opposition of the medium; of the local and the temporary; an opposition which vanishes in the light of the final and the eternal?

And this which we find in the teaching of Jesus is even more strikingly characteristic of the apostolic writings, and notably those of St. Paul. He is the apostle of opposites, of the antithesis. But behind the opposites, looming at times very obscurely, but

always there, is a background of agreement, of a larger reconciliation. It is because theology—or at least the Latin, the Augustinian theology—has fixed its attention so exclusively on the opposites, has looked so intently at the bent stick in the water to the neglect of the straight end outside of it, that it has devised so dark and terrifying a view of God and of human destiny. Hence the predestinarian doctrine of the human race as " a mass of perdition," as utterly lost and reprobate in Adam's fall; of election being the choice of a remnant for salvation, and of the rest as passed over, left to eternal ruin. But it is not St. Paul, but his interpreters who are responsible for these weird conclusions. Read him again; read him as the Greek fathers, as Clement, and Origen, and Theodore of Mopsuestia read him, and you will find his real meaning. He is the master of antithesis. He loves the great contrasts. To illustrate the glory of God's grace he begins by painting the human condition in the blackest colours. He will have the most effective of backgrounds in order to flash upon it the splendour of the Divine redemption. Man is lost, but God will save the lost. His doctrine of election is of an election that, indeed, begins with a few, but does not end there. The elect of that first process are in the scheme for the greater election of the whole. Thus, in the eleventh of Romans, he speaks of Israel as being blinded; having " eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear," and so are cast away. But what is the end of all that? The casting away is for a greater salvation. " For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? "

Man's uttermost need is the reason for God's uttermost mercy. "He hath concluded all under unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." The "all" of the one condition is the "all" of the other. So is it with the range of Christ's redeeming work. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Paul everywhere, while a pessimist about man, is an optimist about God. His pessimism as to the human condition is, indeed, only a veiled optimism. He paints the desperateness of our state only to exhibit in clearer light the glorious possibilities that lie behind.

And this hinterland which reconciles the opposites; this view of our stick from the air as correcting the view from the water, has always been, however obscurely, in the mind of the great Christian thinkers. We find it even in Augustine, and in his darkest moods. It comes out in that passage where, discussing the problem of evil, he declares: "If it were not good that there should be evil, evil would in no wise have been permitted by Omnipotent Goodness." And again: "God deemed it better to do good with evil rather than not to permit evil at all." Augustine was fated to live in the darkest of mediums. The water through which he saw the bentness of the stick was a very muddy water indeed. He saw the world at its darkest, its worst. The Roman Empire, the whole fabric of civilisation, was crashing into ruins. The barbarian hosts, who were tearing it in pieces, were, at the time he wrote, laying waste his Africa, at the very gates of his episcopal city. The stick was very much bent. But even he, so sorely

beset, so badly placed, had his glimpses of that upper realm. Reading between his lines, we catch there his deeper sense ; his belief that good would be the goal of all ; that God's goodness was not only goodness, but omnipotent goodness, the pledge of a final well-being.

There have been in every age sweet, purified spirits, who have dwelt so entirely in the upper airs, in such full view of the ultimate truth, that the oppositions of the lower realm have been to them as nothing. They were orthodox but they saw beyond all the creeds they had subscribed. By way of instance, let me give some further utterances of that exquisite soul the anchoress Julian, devout Catholic of the fourteenth century :

> " For God is all that is good as to my sight ; and God hath made all that is made, and God loveth all that He has made. For in mankind that shall be saved is comprehended all . . . for God, He loveth all that is. For in man is God, and God is in all. . . . For I saw no manner of wrath in God, neither for short time nor for long."

And one could quote endlessly from the mystics of every age, and all to the same effect.

It is well to have had these spirits in our world ; to have had these song-birds of the upper air. But it is well also for the world-process, for the world-redemptive process, that there have been teachers, not less devout, not less nobly inspired, whose mission it has been to live and work amid the oppositions ; to see them at their darkest and their worst. Our great gospellers, our Bunyans, our Wesleys, our Spurgeons, in their terrific emphasis upon sin and its results, in painting for men the wrath to come, and urging them to flee from it, be sure, were not mistaken

in their calling. They were dealing with realities ; and they dealt with them effectively and to excellent results. Sin is an ugly enough reality, and its consequences are not less ugly. But observe that their very appeal, in the manner and the urgency of it, contained in itself a sense and evidence of that hinterland of the final truth. The hinterland is here in full view. For can God deliberately will a hopeless woe from which at the same time He desires to save us ? His wrath here is a means to an end, and the end is the victory of love.

We are beings of two worlds. Or, rather, we live in one world, with an outlook upon another. The realm we find ourselves in is a realm of opposites, and we have to comport ourselves accordingly. These opposites are realities, and we need to put out our full strength in dealing with them. To ignore them were fatal. Our activities, our agony and sweat of toil upon them, are a necessary part of the process by which the wrong things are to be righted and the final good accomplished. But while we toil and strive we are for our comfort to remember that higher realm, where the seeming distractions fade into the calm of the vaster synthesis. In a deeper sense than Virgil's, we are of those who

> " Tendebantque manus ripæ ulterioris amore,"

who " stretch out their hands in love of that farther shore." We glimpse the fact—to quote again our Norwich saint of old—that " our passing life that we have here in our sense-soul, knoweth not what our Self is " ; and believe with her that " all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

VI

SCIENCE AND PRAYER

Says the farmer in Meredith's " Rhoda Fleming " : " For pray, and you can't go far wrong." The remark is one which goes far. It is a challenge to experience, and the experience on which it is founded is a very wide one. Man, indeed, might be defined as the praying animal. Wherever you meet him, from the lowest savagery up to the highest civilisation, you find the instinct of the worshipper. Here all the cults meet. We have seen a group of Mohammedans on the deck of a ship, oblivious of sailors and peering passengers, prostrating themselves with their faces towards the East, wrapped in their devotions. Their creed was not that of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, nor of the Easter throng in Rome, nor of the Hindu multitude at Benares, but they were performing what, in all these regions, and among all these faiths, is an identical act ; an act in which everywhere the soul bends under the same impulse, and in the same direction. The feeling which prompts the act is an essentially human feeling, the response to a human need. And you may take it for granted that whatever is human is true ; true at least for us. When we eat bread we are affirming a truth—the truth that food is good for us. We may know nothing of the science of the business ; we are, perhaps, unable to argue the

point. But our eating is an argument; one that the finest-spun philosophy will not be able to refute; and prayer, as an outcome of the religious feeling, stands on similar ground. For we may say here with Lecky, one of the freest of our thinkers:

> "That religious instincts are as truly a part of our nature as are our appetites and our nerves, is a fact which all history establishes and which forms one of the strongest proofs of the reality of that unseen world to which the soul of man continually tends."

We have had orgies of speculation and of speculative objection on this subject, but the latest thought about it is becoming more modest and more practical. We recognise the argumentative strength of human practice. And the reaction here is a truly scientific one. We are no longer so ready to take the infinite for our province. We are content with what is nearer at hand; with the doctrine of what works well. *Exitus acta probat:* the outcome of things is the best criterion. That is pragmatism on its best, its impregnable side. When we say, "This thing is true as far as we can see; as far as it relates to our own life," we have all there is to go upon. And it is sufficient for the day. Later discoveries may show that our truth is a limited one. But it is not falsified by the higher truth. It is only put in its place. Gravitation, for aught we know, may not be universal; but it is true for our system, and that is enough. The atomic weights and values of our chemistry rested originally on the idea of the ultimate character and indestructibility of the atom. Later researches have undercut that idea, but they have not destroyed the doctrine of atomic weight, nor the deductions that have been formed from it. The doctrine remains

true as far as it goes. The same thing applies to our religious questions. The human experiences here point to a truth, are founded upon it. That we are not able to reach the whole truth ; that we have only perhaps a little bit of it, is no argument at all for undervaluing what we have. We may be sure that what is beyond us will not contradict what is within our reach. We are not at the end, but we are on the right road.

To bring all this to the matter before us, the doctrine of prayer. That there is here a great human experience, with definite results of the most positive character, is, we affirm, the assurance of a truth about it on which we may safely rely. And we may rely on it the more when we consider the objections that have been made against it. For prayer has been attacked in our time on what were considered scientific grounds, and very formidable ones. We remember Huxley's challenge, a quarter of a century ago. He proposed a scientific test as to the curative effects of prayer in our London hospitals, and appeared to imagine that an experiment of this sort would settle the question. We doubt if any scientist of repute would propose the test now. The misconception on which it rests has been too sufficiently exploded. The objection founded itself on the universality of causation, of the laws of cause and effect as we see them at work in the physical universe. A man may pray till all is blue, but if he is at the moment falling from a precipice, gravitation will settle matters with him at the bottom. You cannot by any spiritual effort prevent fire from burning, or water from drowning. That, says our scientist, is how things are ; and, moreover, it is how things

should be. To suppose that the desires, the ideas of a feeble, narrow-minded mortal could alter the cosmic laws would be to introduce inextricable confusion, would reduce everything to chaos. All which, of course, is perfectly true. The mistake is in supposing that this touches in any essential point the doctrine and the practice of prayer.

In adducing the verdict of science as against the belief in prayer, the objectors were confusing two things that are quite distinct. For prayer lives in one realm, and physical science in another. The two realms are intimately related, and they do not contradict each other. But the laws which govern them are different. When we talk physical science, we talk of weights, colours, dimensions, distances, of shapes, of solids, of liquids , of things measurable in time and in space. And the laws here are of a certain order, which fulfil themselves, as we see, with an unfailing regularity. But ranged up alongside of this sphere of things, intersecting, overlapping it at every point, we perceive another sphere and another order. It is that of the mind, of personality. The physical laws come close to that sphere, press up to it at every point. Our thinking goes on inside a brain. All the cells, all the blood, all the nerves of that brain work according to the physical order. The cells are calculable in number. You can reckon up the number of vibrations per second in the ether that are translated into our sensations of colour and of sound. But the brain, the blood and the nerves are not the thinker, nor his thought. They do not go by the same standards. You can weigh the brain, but you cannot weigh a thought. The blood is red, but you cannot talk of a

red aspiration; no, nor of a square one. The adjectives of the one world are ridiculous as applied to this other one. They do not fit.

These are truths too obvious for discussion. The best scientists frankly admit them. Says Tyndall:

"The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is inconceivable as the result of mechanics. The problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the pre-scientific ages."

"Science," says Wundt, "can only indicate the path that leads to territories beyond her own, ruled by other laws than those to which her realm is subject." To this one may add that word of Schopenhauer: "Against the assertion that I am a mere modification of matter, this must be insisted on, that all exists merely in my idea."

Observe now the terms on which our inner personality lives with what we call the inexorable physical laws. While recognising them at every point, it knows itself as not of them, as more than they. They are the rules of the game, but they do not play the game. It is we who do that. When I rise to cross the room, my bones and muscles will obey all the laws of motion. But it is not the laws of motion that send me across the room, but my thought and will which use them, but are not they. We move freely in a bound universe. That is the miracle. We *are* the miracle.

And it is to this region of the spirit, of personality, that prayer belongs. It supposes a kingdom of the spiritual, stretching beyond our ken, just as does the kingdom of the physical. They both begin here, with us, and both stretch beyond us. There

are millions of freely-acting spirits on this earth, clothed as we are with bodies. Why should we suppose we exhaust the spirituality of the universe ? It is an inevitable inference from what goes on around us that behind the physical infinite is a spiritual infinite. Not less can we keep from the supposition that this spiritual infinite is an infinite that includes personality. The thought and love within us sprang from a source that also knows thought and love. To say, as a modern school has said, that a Divine personality is a contradiction in terms, because personality implies limitation, is an argument that overleaps itself. You might just as well say that the absolute or the infinite is a contradiction in terms. For can we not conceive of a non-absolute, of a non-infinite (we are, in fact, that ourselves)—and is not this therefore a contradiction ? When we touch the question of the infinite, on whatever terms we take it, we touch the sphere of contradictions, for it is the sphere of the mind's limitations. The non-belief in a personality solves no mental difficulty.

Keeping to the practical, to what we do know, which is the only sure line for us, when we pray we must accept a personality. We cannot adore oxygen, or offer petitions to the law of gravitation. Prayer is communion with a Person, and what we have already said as to the relations of our own personality to the laws of the physical world makes it easy for us to understand how such communion, how such prayer, and answer to prayer, can go on without any contravention of the physical order. If that physical order does not prevent our fellowship with one another ; does not prevent our appeal

to a neighbour and his answer to it, why should this be impossible as between ourselves and our God? If we can move freely amid the physical laws, cannot He? Are we free, and He the only bound?

That further objection that prayer involves the dictation of man to God; that prayer, where it is answered, means the control of things by man's uninformed wishes, rather than by infinite wisdom, or by the reign of law, falls at once to the ground when we consider what true prayer really is. It is a travesty of the idea to suppose it means saying to God, "Do this, or that"; "Give me what I want"! For the genuine prayer comes in the first instance not from man, but from God Himself. It is the gracious circulation of Divine ideas through the human soul. It is the rain from heaven, falling upon this prepared soil, and springing up there in love, and trust, and holy resignation to a Will higher than itself. It is, as Goethe has somewhere put it, God seeking for Himself and meeting Himself in man. Prayer, at its truest, is not man having his way with God, but God having His way with man.

Let us come back to prayer on its human side; the side we know. We began by speaking of the test of results, and we return to that. We repeat that whatever in a long course of experience shows as a sure help to inner progress, to the development of the best in us, proves itself as founded in the truth of things. How does prayer stand this test? Does not the saying of Meredith's farmer hold good: "Pray, and you cannot go far wrong"? Let a man try it; let him morning and evening, and in the hours of the day, bring himself into mental and moral contact with the All Holy and the All Loving;

let him in that sacred Presence review his affairs, his projects, seeking help and guidance; let him mention there his human relationships, his household, his friends, his enemies if he have such. Will that make no difference to his daily conduct, to the poise of his spirit? A rascal should be kept from prayer by his very sense of humour. The thing is too absurd. It is true that men here play the queerest tricks with themselves. They will outdo an Old Bailey attorney in the pleas with which they seek to sophisticate their conscience and to outwit heaven's Court of Appeal. But the thing is a farce, and they know it. Judgment is against them. There is no communion apart from sincerity. These people may get their selfish way; but the soul's supreme felicity, in a sense of the Divine fellowship, is the thing they will not get.

Prayer is a spiritual exercise, and its results are spiritual. The men who know its fullest exercise are the men who are in a condition to talk about it. *Cuique sua arte credendum est.* Says Bagehot, and with entire truth:

> "The criterion of true beauty is with those—they are not many—who have a sense of true beauty; the criterion of true morality is with those who have a sense of true morality; and the criterion of true religion is with those who have a sense of true religion."

It is so, emphatically, with prayer. The literature of devotion is amongst the best reading in the world. The study of it brings us into contact with the world's greatest spirits—with Jesus, with Paul, with Augustine, with Francis, with Luther, with Wesley. It is the meeting-ground of opposing creeds, where they fuse, lose their opposition, become

one prevailing force. When you are reading Augustine's "Confessions," or Andrewes's "Devotions," or Bishop Wilson's "Sacra Privata," or Methodist William Bramwell's mighty supplications, your forget theological differences; you are in contact with one and the same spiritual energy. To keep on the outer circle of mere fussy activities, while neglecting this innermost force, is like turning a hand-loom and forgetting steam or electricity. In the world of the spiritual, as in that of the physical, to reach the true sphere of power we must go down from the circumference to the innermost centre.

Apart from the question of power, consider the immense comfort of prayer. Man in himself is the loneliest being in the world. The wall of his separate personality shuts him off, as to his interior self, in an awful isolation from all the millions that surround him. His neighbours may look in at his windows, may come into his guest-chamber, but they penetrate never the cell where he sits alone. He is like the island continent of Australia, whose boundaries are rimmed with ports and cities, but whose vast interior lies silent, uninhabited. Yet assuredly this loneliness is no mischance, no accident of his being. It is an insulation from the outward, to secure the uninterrupted play of his spiritual contacts. For the trained soul knows itself as not alone. It knows a perpetual, invisible companionship. It has a speech which it cannot translate to its neighbour. In the glare of the day, in the hum of the crowd, in the silent watches of the night, it talks with the Unseen, it has converse with its Friend. Its past, its present, its future; its trials, temptations, defeats; its joys, its griefs,

all enter into that constant colloquy. Lamartine, in "Les Confidences," speaks of a certain walk in the garden of their French home, where his mother spent always a certain hour of the day—upon which neither husband nor children ever intruded—where she paced, her hands clasped, her eyes lifted to heaven, her lips moving to unuttered words. It was the sacred hour of her speech with God; an hour from which she returned refreshed and renewed. Poor souls, that have not such a Beulah-land to walk in! Poor souls that have, in their inner territory, no such mountain height from which to look down upon their world, to look up to their Father in heaven!

Prayer should never be a task, a mechanism. We read of the monks in the Studium at Constantinople, in the eighth century, that they were called "the sleepless," because they took their turn in ceaselessly chanting, night and day, the year round. There are monasteries and convents to-day where shivering souls are turned out at midnight to go through the prescribed office. It is, we imagine, a sleepy and dolorous function. It would surely be an improvement to invent a machine to do this business for them while they slept like other people. Call this task work if you will: call it discipline, penance, obedience; but do not call it prayer. It is a travesty of the soul's noblest exercise. It will impoverish the body; it will never enrich the heart. You cannot pray without perfect freedom, without, one may say, real enjoyment of your prayer. Physical conditions need here to be studied. There are good people who, in a cold bedroom, in an undressed condition, kneel for a moment—

shivering and impatient for warmth—hasten through an incoherent petition, to escape then into their blankets with a painful duty done. There is nothing much there, one fears, to interest either heaven or earth! Why not get into your blankets first and pray there? At all events, be sure of this: you will know nothing of prayer until it is a joy; a joy like that of the lark who sings as he rises, his song a rapture of upward movement.

To sum up what has here been said. Prayer is a human experience whose test is its results upon the soul. Those results argue its relation to the truth of things. It supposes man's fellowship with a spiritual universe, his immediate contact with a supreme and holy Personality, a supposition against which science, truly considered, brings no valid objection. It is a spiritual force which has wrought in the mightiest souls and in the mightiest movements. It demands as its conditions a true and sincere life. It is the source of man's purest joys. It is the function to which he must bring *his* best in order to receive *its* best. It is his heaven here, and prepares him for all the heavens that are beyond.

VII

OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A WELL-KNOWN French writer, M. Guyot, wrote a book some years ago on "The Coming No Religion," in which he sought to show, on what he called scientific and philosophic principles, that religion, originating in a lower and immature phase of human nature, was on the way to disappearance. Certainly France, during the later decades, has been doing its official best to promote that process. The name of God has disappeared from its public schools and school books. Catholicism, religion's leading expression there, has, in a population of forty millions, gone down to an adherence of some three or four millions. Protestantism represents the merest fraction. It is a curious reflection on this state of things—suggesting that the *post hoc* may be indeed a *propter hoc*—that, according to M. Fouillée, criminality in France has trebled during the last fifty years; though the population has hardly increased. Napoleon, who knew human nature, and French human nature, at least as well as M. Guyot, has a comment on the situation worth noting. In a conversation with Roederer he said: "How shall we get morality? There is only one way; it is to re-establish religion." One wonders whether people who talk of a coming of no religion have ever understood what religion is; what its

relation is to life at all ; above all, to the life of the soul.

How did religion first get into the world ? Whatever its coming fortunes, one thing is incontestable. It is here now, and has been for some considerable time. We meet it, in fact, everywhere and everywhen. Plutarch, who knew the world of his day as well as most, has, on this point, a striking remark. Says he :

> "You might find communities without walls ; without letters ; without kings ; without money ; with no need of coinage ; without acquaintance with theatres and gymnasia ; but a community without holy rite, without a god, that uses not prayer ; without sacrifice to win good or avert evil—no man ever saw or will see."

Religion, we say, is here, very widely and deeply here. When we put the question how it came, we might, as the beginning of an answer, ask another. How did music come into the world ? Groping for an answer, we say it arose out of an experience ; out of a certain outward, which appealed to a certain inward. Men heard sounds ; that was the outside fact. Listening, they found in time that sounds had a certain connection. There were in them harmonies, dissonances. Given combinations of them produced a mysterious inward result. They awoke in the soul deep emotions, new delights and sadnesses. In the end man discovered all the known laws of harmony ; found them written first in the external sounds, and second in ultimate principles of the mind to which they were allied. Nobody doubts to-day of the fact of music, of its actual, ever-enduring character. We are sure that, as long as the soul exists, this will exist. That there are

people who have no ear for music, no appreciation of its depths and heights, is nowhere regarded as an argument against its reality or its power. And we should never dream of going to such people for a proper account of music. The people we regard as entitled to speak about it are those who are fullest of it; who have probed most deeply into its laws and mysteries. It is the experts, the masters here, not the outsiders, who are the authorities for us. In a word, the position of music is based, first and last, on a musical experience.

Let us see how far this analogy applies to religion. One has to move cautiously here, but certain things may, with some confidence, be affirmed. To begin with, religion, like music, rests on an experience. And the experience again is an appeal of the external to the constitution of our mind. Just as sounds, wedding themselves to something within us, started music, so, on a wider scale, the universe, as an outside fact, awoke in the soul, amongst other things, the sentiment of religion. In earlier times, amongst barbaric races, the appeal had a very rude response; just as the primitive musical sense expressed itself by tom-toms and not by Beethoven sonatas. But the tom-tom is no contradiction of the sonata; it is the way to it. And if the barbaric chants of the savage are no evidence against the eternal laws of true music, are rather a hint of their existence, may we not say that man's crude religious notions are, in the same way, a pointer to a deeper, an eternal reality? May we not say, further, that as in music we seek for its best exposition, not amongst those who have least of it, but amongst those who have most, so our idea of religion is to be sought, not

amongst those who have least, but among those who have most ? For we have here to face the undoubted fact, that, as in music, so in religion, there exists among men every possible gradation in the possession of its inner sense. There are geniuses of religion, just as there are geniuses of harmony ; men who know a thrill which others do not know, a vision to which others are blind. Is the vision here less true in its verdict because another sees it not ? Is Newton's " Principia " less true because there are people with no mathematical faculty ?

That argument, we are aware, lies close to a pitfall. An experience, to be of any value for us, depends so much on the character and quality of the person who experiences. He may have seen wrongly. He may have no qualification for the right sort of seeing. We should not pay much attention to the report by Buddhist pilgrims of Buddha's footprint in India, which, we are told, " was larger or smaller according to the faith of the observer." When a savage for the first time sees a bird killed by a gun at a distance of fifty yards, he has received a genuine experience. But his account of it, as told to his fellows, would hardly be accepted by us as a true one. What to him is a miracle, would be to us an every-day occurrence, an affair of the entirely regular working of natural laws. And thus it is that in religion, especially in its earlier forms, we are continually met by experiences real enough in themselves, but the reports of which, in our day and to cultivated minds, have to be corrected by a wider knowledge. What is now offered to us as a revelation, as an intervention of a supernatural Power, requires, before we can accept it, other tests than the

mere statement of it. A man's vision may be evidence for himself. It will be no evidence to our minds—at least, if they are sane and cultured—unless it be backed up by other things; by the character of the testifier, and by its accord with all we know of the order of the world and the laws of the rational soul. But here, again, let us remember that while the religious experience, just as the musical one, has its barbarous expressions, as well as the most cultured ones, the presence of these lowest forms in no way invalidates the final testimony of the higher. That savages make their music by tom-toms and not by sonatas in no way contradicts the fact of a genuine musical sense, nor its value as an interpreter of one phase of universal life. And may not this, which is true in music, be also true in religion ?

The great truths about the universe, of whatever kind, have come to us through personalities with special facilities for perceiving them. We owe mathematical truth to the mathematical genius, from Archimedes and Euclid to Newton and his successors. We know our geology through an Agassiz and a Lyell ; electricity is ours through the gifts of a Faraday, of a Kelvin ; Darwin has opened for us a new world in natural history. Everywhere we see special endowments for special researches. In every direction the universe has opened itself to us through minds attuned to receive its message. What has been true in these departments has been not less true in religion. There is a religious sense not less evident than a mathematical or a musical sense. And as in them, not less in this, there has been an enormous variety of endowment. At one end of the scale we have the religious genius, the seer, the prophet, the

saint; at the other end are people in whom it is dormant, or scarcely existent, just as there are people with little or no musical ear. But as we do not go to these last for musical ideas, so we shall not go for our views of religion to men without the religious sense. More; as the existence of non-musical ears is no contradiction of the fact and truth of music, so the existence of the non-religious is no argument against the fact and truth of religion. Here, as in every other department of knowledge, it is the "haves" and not the "have nots" of whom we must enquire.

And what, to such souls in particular, and to all of us in varying degree, has the universe had to say? The religious sense is, first of all, a feeling for, a yearning after, a something, a someone other than itself. Our deepest sense is that of incompleteness, of being the part of a whole, which needs that whole in order to reach its true self. We are a musical instrument, waiting for the touch of the finger that shall awake its waiting harmony. Some of us had that from our earliest years. We felt that behind the visible scene was a soul of things which we yearned to reach and touch. Have we not known that sensation which Schleiermacher so vividly describes in his "Reden": "I lie at the bosom of the Infinite World. I am, in that moment, her soul; I feel all her infinite life as my own." That sense of our halfness, our yearning for that other One who is soul of our soul, the answer to our aspirations, the One in whose perfection we shall find our true selves, has been put by Wordsworth in verse which all recognise as exquisite, but the truth of which is realised only by those who have felt:

" Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy ;
The youth, who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended."

That, with many of us, has been the first religious experience. There are teachers to-day who would persuade us that humanity is a sort of closed circle, with nothing in it that relates to a beyond-human. All our emotions, our reverence, our instinct of worship, our sense of ideal perfection, are in ourselves and ourselves only. The infinite Goodness, the infinite Holiness, are purely human conceptions, and touch nothing higher than our own minds. However that may be the verdict of the intellect—of some intellects—it is assuredly not the verdict of the heart. The heart's instinct revolts at limitations ; it leaps beyond the bounds of its own frailties, weaknesses and sins, and demands a union with what is greater than itself. That has been ever the affirmation of the great religious natures. The Divine within calls for the Divine without. The spiritual life will be satisfied with nothing less than the Highest for its goal.

This affirmation of the religious nature—that man was to be completed in God ; that he was made to receive the fulness of God—reached in Christianity its fullest expression. The religious experience of Jesus was that of a Divine union, of an eternal Life which flowed over into His Person, filling it with heavenly powers, making it the treasury of immortal

gifts. And so in contact with Him men felt they had broken the seeming closed circle of merely human life. They touched life at its Source. That is the glorious message of the New Testament. Men wrote there what they felt; what they had seen and tasted, and their hands had handled of the Word of Life. It is a book of religious experience unique in the world's history.

We have people among us to-day who ask us to regard all this as an illusion. We hear talk of the "Christ-myth." We are to believe that the New Testament is the outcome of a number of fancies and ideals concerning a Deliverer, a Saviour, that were floating about the world at the time, and which were fixed upon Jesus—Himself a comparatively obscure personage—as a kind of lay figure, adapted and mythicised for the purpose. The odd thing here is that the apostles and disciples concerned in this performance should, with so marvellous an accord, have fastened upon this one figure, to the exclusion of all others! Why Jesus? We are told by the new critics that any number of powerful personalities were concerned in the making of Christianity. How is it that all of them should be obsessed by this same idea; that they should so obstinately refuse to regard themselves as anything in particular; far less as beginners and sources of the new faith; that they should instead persist in declaring this Jesus as the author of all they knew and felt of the Gospel; as the One whose saving power had made them what they were?

In truth this myth-theory, as at present exhibited, is one of the funniest things we have met with—outside of an asylum. The professors of it, when they

are tired of their present experience, should, we may suggest, try their hands in some other equally promising directions. Why does not someone undertake to explode the commonly received notion of an historic Francis of Assisi ? There are abundant materials. There are the legends that gathered about him ; the strange stories of the *Speculum Perfectionis ;* the wondrous narratives of Frater Elias and of Bonaventura. Surely there is here sufficient to construct a brand new and world-compelling theory—that Francis is only the name for a mythus of the Middle Ages, a lay figure of no great actual importance, who stands for the ideas, the faith, the cult of the thirteenth century !

Effects in this world do not come without causes, without adequate causes. The effects produced on the minds and hearts of the first disciples, and with so curious a unanimity attributed by them all to this one Jesus, compel us to look in that direction for their reason and their ground. And when, in addition to this, we find in the recorded teachings and life of this Jesus the source of the changed life of multitudes in all ages since, and most of all in ourselves, we have an additional reason for accepting the New Testament account of Him as a religious experience which may be trusted. And the greatest thing here has not been said. It is this : that in their adoring look upward to Him in His ascended life, the first disciples found, and we find after them, the realisation of our deepest aspiration ; the breaking by Him of humanity's closed circle ; the clear reaching out of the human to the Divine.

VIII

INTELLECT AND CHARACTER

" CLEVER men," said Huxley once, " are as common as blackberries ; the rare thing is to find a good one." The famous scientist here puts before us the whole question of character and intellect. He himself offers us an example of the distinction between them. Of his mental force there was never any question. It was there, beating in the brain of him, to use as he chose. But character ! What a business he found the winning of that ! In his touching letter to Kingsley—one of the sincerest and most moving of self-confessions—he tells us something of the struggle. " Kicked into the world," without proper guidance, " I confess to my shame few men have drunk deeper of all kinds of sin." From that slough he was saved by three things. Carlyle's " Sartor Resartus " taught him that " a deep sense of religion was compatible with the entire absence of theology." After religion he puts the pursuit of scientific truth, and then a pure love. The mind was a gift, the character a hard-won victory. We have here not only the history of a man, but the history of a world. The human development has followed along these separate lines. Man has been pushed along by two forces—what we may call his brain power and his heart power.

Nothing is more interesting than to watch the interplay of these two; their twin development, their mutual relations, their relative importance. The problem of civilisation to-day is wrapped up in their separate and their mutual action.

The education of the human race, as German philosophy has so abundantly taught us, has been an affair of unconscious co-operation. One department of it has been put out to one race, another to another. For illustration look at Athens and then at Jerusalem. In Greece we find the first-class minds of the ancient world. Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pheidias, Praxiteles, Archimedes, Thucydides, are, in their several ways, prophets of the intellect. They stand for philosophy, physics, mathematics, art, music, politics, the whole sphere of things with which the mind can busy itself. They are the pioneers of research, openers of the ways in which truth-seekers have been travelling ever since. When you pass from Greece to Palestine you find yourself in another world. Open on Isaiah or Micah, read the New Testament from cover to cover, and you will find scarce a word about mentality. There is nothing about philosophy, or geometry, or music, or painting, or the science of history or the science of politics. If you kept to the Bible, you would learn nothing worth knowing about the physical universe; no hint of the methods by which its secrets are to be disclosed. Summing the two up, you may say: "Greece is all for knowledge; Palestine is all for character." We are learning to-day the immeasurable debt we owe to both. When you ask, "Which is the mightier; which the more important?" Huxley's statement,

remembering what he stood for, may well set us thinking.

The tremendous insistence of the Judæan prophets and apostles upon character as the one thing needful is simply the putting in another way what our nineteenth century scientist put in his—that cleverness is inferior to goodness, that, in the order of world-values, the moral is over the mental. Intellect is a sort of brute force; the whole question is how you are going to use it; and that question has to be answered from something beyond the mental. The unconscious judgment of the world here has expressed itself in the conception of the devil as a first-class intellect—and as bad as he can be. The world has had some brilliant understudies of him in these respects which go to confirm the idea. You cannot decide whether a man is going to be a blessing or a curse by the size of his brain. Of itself it may be so much force off the rails—a blind, devastating force. A man may have a superb calculating faculty, a genius for combination, a fascinating eloquence, and it may serve the spirit of a buccaneer. There have been men of that kind in abundance. Let anyone, for instance, study the Renaissance period in Italy. It is like looking into a midnight thunderstorm. At every point there are lightning-flashes of wondrous genius, which serve only to reveal the more vividly the blackness of the moral depravity. On the throne of the Vatican we see Alexander VI., the Borgia, living in abominable relations with his daughter Lucretia—the official representative of Christ committing every crime that was possible to man. We see Benvenuto Cellini doing matchless work as artist, and then describing with gusto his

debaucheries, his murders. Machiavelli writes his "Prince," in which he instructs rulers in the whole science of despotism and devilry. Never were there more brilliant brains or blacker hearts. In later days there has been no greater intellect than that of Napoleon, at least in wide regions of mentality, yet Taine, that dispassionate historian, has surely not exaggerated when he speaks of his character as that of an

> "egotism, active and invading, proportioned to the activity and range of his faculties, exaggerated by success and absolute power, until it becomes a monster, raising in the midst of human society a colossal 'I' which brooks no resistance, which crushes all independence."

Yet Napoleon believed in character, and some of the best testimonies to the importance of it, and to the sources of it, come from him. He knew he could not win victories without it. Everything, he held, depended on the *morale* of an army. And the *morale* was an affair of the soul. "It is not for five sous," said he once, "or for a vain distinction that a man will risk his life. It is in speaking to his soul that one electrifies a man." He was equally clear as to the source of character. Metternich recounts his remark to him that "an atheist of good faith never existed." And we recall again his significant words to Roederer, "How shall we get morality? There is only one way: it is to re-establish religion." He was here of the mind of Cromwell, who formed his Ironsides, not of the roysterers and tapsters who swelled the Royalist ranks, but of men who had faith in them and a morality built upon it.

And here we come upon a capital truth in this relation. When we see religion, as in the New

Testament, bending itself, to the neglect of all else, to the inner reformation of man, we are witnessing not a moral movement only, but also an intellectual. Even when it does not know it, it is all the time feeding the intellect, preparing in the surest way for its expansion and higher activities. To the age of high feeling succeeds by a sure process the age of high thinking. When John Knox and his coadjutors gave Scotland a religious life instead of a form, they unloosed the Scottish intellect, to make it then and ever since one of the great intellectual forces of the world. Puritanism rendered a like service to England and to America. The Eastern States, the Puritan States, have been the mental nerve of the West. Later on, Wesley and his preachers were fertilisers of the English mind. There has never been a great revival that has not had a higher mentality as an after-product. The second or third generation that trace back to it may change their attitude to the belief of their fathers, may even adopt a hostile one. All the same, it remains that the deep, inward movement at the beginning is the hidden source of the mental products that succeed. When you turn men from frivolity and vice to depth and seriousness of character, you have fructified not only the world's soul, but all its powers.

In saying this we are not unaware of another side to the question. That religion, in its proper conception, feeds the intellect is, we believe, a truth of history and a truth of psychology. That, however, cannot always be said of the Church as an institution. The Church as a human society has made enormous mistakes in this direction, and is to-day paying for them. For a very long period it has misjudged its

relation to the intellect, with disastrous consequences. At an early age it began to exercise its reason—at the time a very crude and uninformed reason—upon the religious facts before it, and then proclaimed these exercises as an infallible criterion of faith and life. It rationalised Christianity into an abstruse metaphysical system, from which it proceeded to warn off all further investigation. The procedure was a contradiction in terms. Reason had had fullest play in this constructive process, and then was ordered to stop short. As if it could! One might as well ask the human heart or lungs to stop functioning. The Church was here the great sceptic. It denied the Divine order of things; denied the right of one part of the soul's equipment to work with the other part. And this fatal path was trodden for centuries, and is still being trodden. Lecky's indictment of Papal ascendancy in the Middle Ages seems hardly exaggerated:

"Every mental disposition which philosophy pronounces to be essential to legitimate research was almost uniformly branded as a sin, and a large proportion of the most deadly intellectual vices were deliberately inculcated as virtues. The theologians, by destroying every book that could generate discussion, by diffusing to every field of knowledge a spirit of boundless credulity, and, above all, by persecuting with atrocious cruelty those who differed from their opinions, succeeded in almost arresting the action of the European mind."

Rome is still pursuing this method. Where its ascendancy is greatest ignorance is densest, and that by a deliberate system. In the Papal States up to the time of their absorption into the Italian kingdom, scarce one of the peasantry was able to read. Loisy, writing as one of its priests, confesses "its rock is to want too much to govern men, in place of elevating

souls." And again, " One cannot deny the tendency of Catholicism has been towards the effacement of the individual, to place man under tutelage, to control all his activities in a way which does not help initiative." The same spirit, the same distrust of the intellect, as though it were the enemy and not the friend of religion, has been carried over into Protestantism. We have Luther talking of " wringing the neck of reason, and strangling the beast." Sir Thomas Browne in the " Religio Medici," quietly assumes that " reason is a rebel unto faith." And the Free Churches have in recent years offered the spectacle of a deliberate attempt to strangle officially the mind of their teachers in the supposed interests of the Gospel.

All this, we say, is the wrong road. It is a march towards the abyss. It is a fight against the laws of Nature, a fight where the issue is always the same. When the Church loses its faith in the mind, it loses its faith in the God who made the mind. And it is time it began once more to believe in Him. It will have to come back to the principle of Locke, that only that which has justified itself to the reason, and at the same time won man's free assent, can exercise an inward control over his nature. It will have to realise, as Schopenhauer puts it, that faith is like love—it cannot be forced. If the Church of our time would resume its old place in the direction of men, it will have to occupy itself with the problem to which Schelling in his later period turned his energies, that of bringing about the rebirth of religion through the operation of science in its supremest form. In other words, its problem is the reunion, after this long separation, of the intellect and of the

moral consciousness as the allied factors in the production of character.

For it remains, notwithstanding all the disastrous history of the past, that only in union with the spiritual life can the intellect obtain its freest and fullest play. The old Brahmins were right in making it a condition of the pursuit of philosophy that its aspirants should begin by subduing their passions and rigorously regulating their moral life. There are certain truths, and these the highest, that only open to the pure heart. You cannot see them with the mind till the soul gets there. This is what Zwingli meant in that notable declaration of his: "Truth does not depend on the discussions of men, but has its seat and rests itself invincibly in the soul. It is an experience which everyone may have. It is not a doctrine, a question of knowledge, for we see the most learned men who are ignorant of this thing, which is the most salutary of all." You can never know the truth about prayer but by praying. You can never understand the force of renunciation but by renouncing. You can never understand the potency of faith but by the soul's trust. You will never open the hidden secret of happiness until, upon earth's sorrows and defeats, there has flashed the light of that Divine vision which is given only to the pure in heart. Has not Socrates put it all for us in that saying in the "Gorgias":

"Now I, Callicles, am persuaded of the truth of these things, and I consider how I shall present my soul whole and undefiled before the Judge in that day. Renouncing the honours at which the world aims, I desire only to know the truth, and to live as well as I can, and when the time comes, to die. And to the utmost of my power I exhort all other men to do the same."

We repeat, the New Testament was right in staking everything upon character. Without the best character you cannot get the best intellect. And apart from that, intellect of itself can yield no ultimate satisfaction ; cannot save a man from the worst errors. We hear sometimes, " To genius everything is permitted." Does Nature say that ? Let genius try, and she will exact her penalty. A Byron, a Shelley, made the experiment ; we know with what result. In an impressive passage, Lamartine describes how Mirabeau, with the fate of France in his hands, when the choice lay between saving his country or selling himself to the Court—his conscience and his will weakened to nothing by his vices and his debts—failed at the supreme hour and lost all. Says Carlyle, " The hope of humanity lies in heroes being born to it." Well, heroism is first and last character. The man who would serve his country must first of all have mastered himself. He must have discovered the difference between cleverness and wisdom. Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, laid the foundations of their empires on character, and their empires have lasted. Buddha begins by his act of self-renunciation under the Bhô tree. Confucius wins through the practice of the simple life. Says he: " With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy in the midst of these things." Jesus conquered the world by laying down His life for His brethren. In different degrees of fulness, they taught one thing —that to open the soul to all that is divinest in life, to saturate it with spiritual principle, here is the way of strength for others and for ourselves. Here get we the ultimate satisfaction. Along this road, and this

only, can we reach the condition which M. Brémond describes as that of Newman in his last days: "He can lay his head on his pillow at night, and vow in God's sight that he wants nothing: that he is full and abounds, and that nothing is not his which God would give him."

The supreme question for modern civilisation is the formation of character. Of what use are our material advancements if they leave only a dismal emptiness within? Of what use carrying the people at sixty miles an hour if they are fools when they get into the train and fools when they get out? Of what use our latest telegraphy if it flings across the world no better news than of commercial frauds, of society intrigues, of the follies of the rich and the discontent of the poor? You may start your common schools, and train the children into clever devils—to thieve better, to lie more plausibly. You may teach them to read that they may saturate their minds with filth. Any education that is not first and foremost a training in character is only a preparation for villainy's more effectual service. A cultivated scoundrel may do more harm with a stroke of his pen than a score of burglars will accomplish in a twelvemonth. Are we training the English soul to-day? Can we say of England what Milton said of her in his time? "Let not England forget her precedence in teaching nations how to live." For England has been built on character; on such conformity as she has attained to the inmost nature of things; on such obedience as she has shown to the laws of the soul. For her, and for ourselves, there is only one way of the conquering life. It is the way which the New Testament discloses—of service, purity, and love.

IX

THE MISSIONARY

THE missionary is to-day coming to his own. He is emerging from the doubtful celebrity of denominational reports and of the applause of village conventicles, into a place full of the popular eye. He is talked of in the newspapers, he is acknowledged by science, he enters into the calculations of statesmen, he is recognised as a prominent factor in the remaking of the world. The Œcumenical Conference at Edinburgh—for it was that—where was gathered a wider consensus of Christian thought than in any Church Council of past ages, is the latest testimony to his influence, to the position he is taking as a factor in modern civilisation. He is the representative of Christianity on its aggressive, conquering side. His position, let us say at once, is open to enormous criticism, and he gets it. The man in the street has the most varied opinions about him, and it may be opportune just now to look at him from that standpoint, to see, without *parti pris* and from the most unfettered point of view, what there is to be said for him and his work.

The missionary is a specialised form of a universal product. We are all missionaries of sorts. We are all propagandists of something. The Free-thinker, the Agnostic, the Nihilist, as well as the convinced believer—all of us love to express our opinion and

to win converts to it. Our conduct is a daily profession of faith, which has its effect on those who surround us. National movements on the broad scale are all missionary movements. An army on the march carries with it more than swords and guns. It carries opinions. Alexander in his conquests spread Greek ideas over half the world. Definite faiths, indeed, have often been spread by the sword. Mahomet was an ardent missionary in his way, as have been all his followers. So was Charlemagne, who proposed to the conquered Saxons the alternative of conversion or of instant slaughter. The trader is always a missionary. John Knox reports that it was chiefly by merchants and mariners, who by frequenting other countries "heard the true doctrine affirmed," that Protestantism was spread in Scotland. Geordie Stephenson was no professed theologian, but when he started his railway and his locomotive he did more for the rapid spread of Christianity than any religious agency. The British trader of to-day is, alas! a missionary of somewhat doubtful order. At Singapore, at Hong Kong, at Calcutta, through China and India and Africa, he exhibits the principles which guide him, and at which the natives who surround him look on with some bewilderment. John Bull abroad is a missionary of the creed of wealth, of class and colour distinction, of low pleasures, of a whole-hearted materialism. It is a queer sort of Christianity, and the missionary of the other sort has his work cut out in persuading the heathen witnesses of it that there is any other.

But there is another, and some thousands of devoted people, in all these places, are occupied in teaching it. The Church's missionary work is the

romance of Christianity, its heroic side. More than that, it is the side from which, one can clearly see, is to come the most profound and revolutionary influence upon religious thinking at home. The missionary is, for one thing, the breaker up of routine. The religious teacher in this and other countries of Christendom is bound by a thousand conventions. He is the inheritor of ages of tradition in thought and practice—tradition which has cut deep channels for his going, out of which only the strongest can escape. In many Churches he is the slave of ceremonies, tied hand and foot by old-time rituals, by creeds made for him long before he came into the world. His office is his gaoler ; prescribes his dress, his mode of speech, his very accent. It marks out his limits here and there, and shuts him off by invisible barriers from the freedom of his fellows. What has been written on the mind of his constituency as to what the priest or minister should do or say is the Draconian law under which he lives.

Much of all this, far too much, follows the missionary into his field of action. But circumstances are in his favour, and work for his freedom. The people among whom he goes bind him with no law. He is there to offer them a new one of his own. He has no need to robe himself ecclesiastically. He can dress as the first apostles did, in the common garb. He can wear a turban or a pigtail if he wants to. And the loosing goes further than the outside. In front of these new minds, ignorant of all that has happened in Church history, he is under no obligation, finds it, in fact, an impossibility, to concern himself with the metaphysics that in Christendom have too often passed for the Gospel—with the minutiæ

of the Athanasian Creed, with the hard dialectics of the Westminster Confession. He is—happy man !—forced back upon the simplicities of religion, upon what first won the souls of men, upon the love and power which in the first age gushed from the heart of Christ and turned the early world upside down. That great winner of men, St. Vincent de Paul, touches the secret of simplicity in the advice he gave to his mission priests :

"Show the motives which lead to virtue and to the hatred of evil ; in what virtue consists, and how one may obtain it ; these are the principal points which a missionary should develop simply, with all his heart, in his addresses."

It is, indeed, one of the privileges of the missionary that he can leave out so much ! The age-long disputes which, time after time, have rent Christendom in twain ; the dogmatic assertions made in a time when true science, an accurate view of the cosmos, were unknown, and which have now been proved wrong ; the things doubtful which have beforetime been affirmed as certainties; all this he can leave behind him. He will not, if he be wise, tie up these new disciples with spiritual bonds from which we, with grievous trouble and pain, are just now freeing ourselves. To their eager questions he can give replies, not from the fourth or the sixteenth centuries, but from that of his own. His business is not in furbishing up old theories, but in forming new characters ; he is to be the interpreter, not of councils and confessions, but of the marvellous love of God in Christ Jesus. And one can envy him here as the bringer to untouched hearts of the sweetest, greatest possession of all life, the soul's first rapture in knowing itself beloved, beloved of God ! The Gospel story

is too often dimmed for us, emptied of its preciousness, by a thousandfold repetition. It is by a sort of Divine accident—so it has seemed—that with some of us, escaped for the moment from the death of convention, the beautiful message was realised as addressed to ourselves. We remember across a lifetime the exquisite joy of that hour. The memory of it comes to us as we think of the millions of untaught souls who are to come into that rapture; of the millions who for the first time are to hear the Sermon on the Mount, and to know it as a message for them. And no privilege we can think of is equal to that of being the bringer of this joy.

The missionary, in sowing his seed on these soils, is doing all manner of daring things; is preparing all manner of strange and unlooked-for results. For the soil is a prepared one, and the fruit will be not according to the seed only, but to the ground it falls on. The result here is an amalgam, and the amalgam is never the same. When you pour water on an acid the effect is one thing; pour the same water, out of the same vessel, on the ground or on the fire, and the effect is another thing. So when you pour your Gospel into different minds, into different races. Do you suppose that Paul's word preached to the heathen communities at the borders of the empire had the same echo as when it fell upon Jewish ears in Jerusalem? It differed with all the difference of the previous cultures of the listeners. So you got Jewish Christianity and Greek Christianity. And so to-day you will get Chinese Chistianity and Indian Christianity, the Christianity of black and of white, of East and of West. You talk of uniformity, but Nature will have none of it. She strives, and

it is the Divine striving, after the glory and interest of variety. She laughs at your attempts to tie her up. Make all the peoples recite one creed, and every man will attach a different meaning to every word of it. It will be so because *he* is different from every other. When the Church sets about suppressing dissidents, she should first catch the chiefest of them all, and the creator of them all, to wit, the nature of things. It is in this way that the missionary, by the very success of his endeavours, will teach us the true catholicity, a oneness of aim and devotion, with an infinite variety in the expression of them.

Likewise, as his work progresses, as it brings him into contact with all the earlier faiths in which men have grown up, he will learn for himself, and teach the Church, that other Catholic truth, of the Divine training that has been going on from the beginning, in every land and nation. He will find that no people has ever believed in evil, but always in the good; that every religion has been in its way, and up to its limits, a fight against evil, and for the good. That devoutest of evangelical believers, Count Zinzendorf, had learned this lesson. Says he: "Since then I have always set myself to discover the good there is in each religion, for I know that in every nation the Saviour has those who love Him." Could we expect, indeed, a universal acceptance of Christ's message, were there not everywhere a common ground of sentiment and feeling to which it appealed? And that common ground has been of Divine preparation. The world's spiritual teachers—its Confucius, its Lao Tsze, its Zarathrustra, its Gautama, its Socrates—have not been running atilt against each other, have not been leading the race in opposite

directions. They have each and all meant the good, and have striven for it. The Christian teacher brings new reinforcements for this spiritual warfare; carries these peoples a farther stage on their journey; opens to them a new view of the goal. And thus, as one of the chief agents of the Church's prodigal variety, he is at the same time the opener of its vaster unity.

The modern missionary, in his best type, is giving us the example of what Western civilisation, so confused in its moral ideas, is somewhat blindly seeking after—the transformation of courage, the sanctification of hardihood. He is adventurer, tracker, explorer, pathfinder, facing all the mishaps and dangers which belong to these *rôles*. Livingstone in Africa, Chalmers in New Guinea, Paton in the South Seas, Griffith John and Timothy Richard in China, show all the pith of the Vikings, with Christianity added. And the women are not behind. When we read of the splendid daring of the mediæval missionaries; of those Anglo-Saxon nuns—Lioba, Walburga, Berthgytha and others—who, in the eighth century, under Boniface, did so much to evangelise Europe, we can match them with cultured, delicately-nurtured maidens, who in our time have gone out from English homes to face the horrors of the Congo, to fight famine and plague in India, to perish in China under the brutalities of the Boxer rising. In this field there has been shown the highest strength of our race.

The place the missionary has taken in the modern world movement is indicated, for one thing, by the criticisms of which he is the object. He is the butt of certain novelists, of a certain class of

travellers and traders. The native whom he evangelises is, according to their accounts, a spoiled native. He becomes baptised for what he can get. The teaching he receives raises, inside his black skin, a whole crop of restless ambitions, of new and dangerous discontents. Amid the talk of "spoiling the native," we do not hear from this source anything of the process of spoiling by gunpowder, bad whisky, and wholesale debauchery, introduced by the white man who here becomes critic. The superior white who talks down at the missionary as a bungling demoraliser, is especially rigid about guarding what he calls "the colour line." The idea of the coloured man aspiring to the privileges of the white races has on him the effect of sacrilege. The extraordinary thing in this connection is that wherever this species of white man appears we have straightway a generation of half breeds; we get quadroons and octoroons, a whole graduation of semitones. How has this come about? Where is the "colour line" here? For the coloured man to aspire to the white woman should be met with burning at the stake. But the white man and the coloured woman—that is quite another affair. A glance at such facts gives us in a flash the root of missionary unpopularity amongst gentry of this sort. It is the unpopularity of the searchlight, of the policeman's lantern amongst burglars. Let it be granted that the first results of evangelising effort amongst barbarous races is in some instances bizarre, ludicrous to the critical eye. Well, we are most of us more or less ludicrous when we are learning a new thing. A man who walks with perfect ease and grace shows badly in his first attempt at horsemanship. Is that a reason why he should

not learn to ride ? The struggle upwards throws us into all manner of queer attitudes. But climbing is good for all that. The Saxons and Danes, who in these islands first received the Gospel, were not models of deportment. Despite that, we of the twentieth century may be glad that our ancestors were missionised. The coloured races a few centuries hence will pass a similar verdict on their own fortunes, a verdict with which the world will agree. Of the criticisms of this order we may indeed say with the Arabs : *" Les chiens aboient, la caravane passe."*

We look to the modern missionary, not only for the effects he is producing on the heathen world, but for the reaction of his work upon our Christianity at home. Already he is showing as one of the mightiest forces for the re-union of the Churches. He will be doing a still greater work by exhibiting the necessity and the practibility of a purified Christianity —for home as well as foreign consumption. He is finding out that, in face of that outside, pagan world, our sectarian dogmas are cheap. They are not the material he wants ; for his equipment he has to leap over them, back to the primeval New Testament forces of God's love and Christ's transforming power. And what is necessary for him is necessary for us. If we would win back our own outside populations we must get rid of systems which made possible the crushing indictment of Diderot on the eighteenth century Catholicism of France : " A system of the most absurd and atrocious dogmas, the most unintelligible, metaphysical and intricate, and consequently the most liable to dissensions, schisms and heresies." The world of to-day, Christian

and non-Christian, can well dispense with this. What it is athirst for, what it must have or die, is that love of God and man which Jesus taught as the first and last commandment, of which His Gospel is the one supreme revelation.

X

LIFE AND THE FORMULAS

"I AM a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, Templar. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come!" Thus writes the genial, home-loving Lamb, shivering to his soul as he thinks of being stripped of his warm earthly wrappages and standing unclothed in the waste infinite. One does not like to feel naked here or elsewhere. But there is such a thing as being over-clad. Lamb has mentioned only a bit of his clothing. We find ourselves so mentally trussed and wrapped, with so huge a collection of bindings and integuments fitted on to us, that the wonder is we can move at all. One has a sense at times of their cumbrousness. Here, for instance, is your man, your Englishman. There he is, some six feet more or less of him, a warm, living creature, with abundant strength and capability; with warm affections, with all manner of possibilities lurking in his eager vitality. A free man, we say; but *is* he free? As we watch him we find him covered with adhesive labels, thickly encased in formulas. You describe him not in terms of freewill, but of half a dozen abstractions. He is, you say, a Tory, a High Churchman, a Tariff Reformer, an Imperialist, an aristocrat. This other man, on the other side of the hedge, is a Radical, a Dissenter, a Free Trader. Another man you describe as a

Romanist, or a Jew, or an alien, a foreigner. And these abstractions penetrate and fill men's minds; govern their likes and dislikes, dictate their definitions of character. To the Tory High Churchman the Dissenter is an objectionable person. The Dissenter, in his turn, has a horror of the priest, the sacramentalist. Both of them unite in their distrust of the foreigner. It is a curious state of things. Are these separate men all contained in these definitions? Have we got at them as realities when we have used these words about them?

There was a time, in the far, far past, when men were without formulas. They were just men, and that was all. The separate theories about life, out of which these labels were formed, were non-existent. Their one pre-occupation was as to where they would find their next meal, or the cave which would shelter them for the night. And they did very well. Nature, which in the meantime had her own theory, looked after their simple existence; made it possible, and, we may believe, sufficiently pleasant.

But life moved on. Things happened. Men multiplied and grew thick on the ground. Swarms of them moved off in search of food and space. They wandered far, and there came thus the great separations. Meanwhile the soul grew; grew into thought, into imagination, into conscience. Men began to study the problems of life; of their whence and whither. So came religion; and the far separations which had taken place in the tribes of men, their isolation from each other, secured that these religions should have their distinctive type; should be, as it were, indigenous to the soil. We are apt to ask why it is that if there be one true religion, it should not

have been from the beginning a universal religion ; one in which all men saw the same truth, had the same quality of spiritual life ? You may puzzle over that as long as you please ; the simple fact is that it was not so, and evidently was not meant to be so. Greece produces one faith, Palestine another. While Judæa is developing her Bible, India is creating her Vedas, Persia her Zend-Avesta. China has her prophets, her Confucius, her Lao-Tse, who settle her faith for ages. Buddha arises, and his formula captures hundreds of millions. Centuries after Christianity Mohammed appears in Arabia and establishes, even in regions which had once been Christian, his vast and enduring spiritual empire. These faiths not only are markedly distinct from the others ; they each proclaim themselves the only true religion, and ban all others. Their authorities are infallible. The Brahmans uphold the verbal inspiration of the Vedas ; the Koran is held by the Mohammedans to be inerrant. Christianity has had its own stoutly upheld doctrine of the absolute inerrancy of its Scriptures. And we know the Catholic dictum : "Outside the Church there is no salvation." The splits that have occurred in these communities have in no wise diminished their separate exclusiveness. They have all had their splits. Buddhism was a break off from Brahmanism. Mohammedanism has its Sunnites and its Shiites. Christianity is divided into Catholic and Protestant, each denouncing the other. In our England every town, every village has its separations, each with its formula. There they stand, our churches and chapels, each in itself a formula, as clear, as hard, as the stones into which it is built.

And all this, let us well remember, is the work of nature, of life, at a certain stage of its evolution. Man has not arranged himself in this way for the mere fun of the thing. His religions are not a whim. Their very separateness, their exclusiveness, form an integral part of the life-movement. They were wrought by him and in him by a certain necessity. Life was working here through him in its own way and towards its own ends. It was thus, and thus only that, at the stage he had reached, certain elements essential to his self-consciousness, to his complete humanisation, could be born and nurtured. That countless millions of our fellows have lived and died in these faiths; have ventured their all on them; have found in them their inner strength, their hope and consolation—do we think this could have been an accident, a blunder, an evidence simply of human badness? Who can believe that who believes in any sort of guidance for the world?

But we are now in another stage. The evolution that has brought us so far has taken another step forward, and in doing so has opened up an immense new prospect. The period of separations, with all they have wrought in the human spirit, is closing. We have ceased to be unknown to each other. The world has become vastly smaller and closer together. The railway, the steamship, the telegraph, the press, are making us familiar with one another. The East is in the West, and the West is in the East. We are studying each other's literatures, each other's religions. We are getting behind our formulas and looking each other in the face. And we are only beginning to understand what the result of this will be, what an immense result it must be. It will be, for one

thing, a great revision of our formulas. They were good enough for the time they served. Nature here is so strict an economist ; she gives us enough, and just enough, to be going on with. She holds back her higher formula till it is wanted. It is so in science. Up to a few years ago, science held to its doctrine of the atom as indivisible, indestructible, the one ultimate monad. And it served our science well. But when Nature, listening behind our British Association meetings, at gatherings of the *élite*, heard their confident declarations of this doctrine, she smiled; she knew a little more. She let her disciples proclaim their formula, till one fine day they struck on radium, and their formula was dead ! We can imagine her, in like manner, standing behind the Church Councils as they drew up their dogmas and proclaimed their several infallibilities. And she encouraged them at their work, supplied them with board and lodging, kept their hearts beating, their brains at work. It was good work for the time, for certain great human purposes ; and yet the smile was on her face. Her formula was a bigger one than theirs. And we are now, with wonder and some confusion, beginning to discover how much bigger it is.

Life, the sheer experience of it, the fuller knowledge of it, is compelling us to revise our formulas. We can no longer say, with our fathers, that all was truth that was given in Judæa, and all false that was believed outside ; that God spoke in Hebrew and Palestinian Greek, and that the devil was preceptor in all other languages. Humanity has had a benigner history than that. We turn, for instance, to the Dhamanapada of Buddha and find this :

"For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time. Hatred ceases by love. This is an old rule. Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcone evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth."

Can such teaching have any evil, any diabolic origin? Can it be less than a ray of that Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world? Let us come nearer home. We fight for our Protestantism as a precious development of Christian liberty, a re-discovery of the simplicity of Christ. But we read this, which Baron von Hügel, in his book on "Eternal Life," from personal acquaintance testifies of a Catholic priest. It is of the Abbé Huvelin, who died in 1910:

"A gentleman by birth and breeding, a distinguished Hellenist, who could have been a great editor, or interpreter of Greek philosophy . . . he occupied for thirty-five years an unpaid post in a large Paris parish. There, suffering from gout in the eyes and brain, and usually lying prone in a darkened room, he served souls with the supreme authority of self-oblivious love, and brought light and peace to countless souls."

Does any religious formula we have learned keep us out of sympathy and admiration for such a life? keep us from calling it a truly Christian life? Then be sure the formula is a bad one. We need continually to get behind our formulas. Your Tory is so much more than Toryism; your Catholic than Romanism.

Our formulas have much to answer for. Our age has witnessed nothing more tragic—and this in some of the finest minds—than the destruction of faith in the revolt against a too restricted, a too inelastic formula. This has been the case especially in

France. The French mind is so severely logical; it must have its definition, its clear-cut thinking, on one side or the other. And so, in religion, if it finds the definition in which it has been brought up to be defective, unable to bear the strain of facts, its reaction is tremendous, and has meant, in a multitude of noble souls, a complete catastrophe of faith. Take the case of Edmond Scherer, the ripe scholar, the consummate critic. Scherer was of Swiss origin, but he was educated in Paris, and spent his best years there. His mind was essentially French. Brought up in early life under Protestant influences, the subject of deep religious impressions, he becomes a professor in the Free Divinity School of Geneva. He is there as a champion of the strictest Calvinistic orthodoxy, and holds with conviction the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible. His students must not choose passages in the Bible as more evidently inspired than others. His faith is absolute in this as the only truth. He begins his morning lectures with the prayer: "O God, Thou art the God of Truth. We are seeking truth. Thou alone canst make it known to us. Amen." But then comes the tragedy. With truth as his one object, he is faced by the problems of modern Biblical criticism. Under it his formula breaks down. He ends by giving up orthodoxy, by giving up Protestantism, by giving up Christianity, by giving up faith in God. He becomes henceforth the Stoic, unable to see any Divine direction, any great hope for man; unable to reach any higher point than a passive resignation in face of a purposeless world.

Here was a leap from one formula to another, and neither of them a good one. The scientific material-

ism which leaves the soul no room for hope, for faith, for the ideal, for the instinct of prayer, for the ineffable joys of the religious life, is, we are sure, as wide of the ultimate secret as is the grossest superstition. The formula which excludes these is again too small a formula. We distrust its reason from the very fact that it makes reasoning—our thin logic-chopping—the final verdict-giver, the only thing in us to listen to. And all the while there is such a bigger reasoning going on inside us than our mere brain-work. It is the reasoning of our total life, too big to be put into syllogisms, to be expressed in words; the reasoning that lies deep in the felt necessities of the soul; the reasoning that lives in the heart, that compels it to love the good, to adore the holy, to thirst for living waters, to find its belief deepest when the world shows at its worst. Deep in the heart life whispers its secret and bids us hope. Life, which has pushed its upward way from plant to animal, from animal to man, from brute instinct to noblest aspiration, has not done with us yet. Its final formula goes beyond time, will take an eternity to unroll.

The formulas of negation seem just now to be in the ascendant; the denials, the despairs of France, of a Scherer, a Leconte de Lisle, of a Proudhon, are passing over to us. They crop up in all our latest literature—in Galsworthy, in H. G. Wells, in Arnold Bennett, in Watson, in Bernard Shaw. Sir Francis Younghusband, in his recent book, "Within," offers us a new religious formula, a formula without God. Sir Francis, the world-wide traveller, the skilled diplomat, the leader in perilous political missions in China and Tibet, reveals himself every-

where in his pages as a man of noble instincts, of scrupulous honour, of rigid conscientiousness. But he had not long ago an experience of terrible suffering. He was run down on the Continent by a motor-car, which broke him up and laid him, for six months, on a bed of agonising pain. There, as he lay, he ruminated on the whole problem of suffering; on the awful extent of it in the world, and on its seeming needlessness. He comes to the conclusion that this fact rules out the possibility of an all-wise and benevolent Creator. What, then, is there? How account for man's spiritual life? He tells us we must find it within. It began in a mysterious primordial impulse, an amalgam compounded of the first movements of matter and mind, which has been steadily developing ever since, and which we find now as an inner spirit which pushes on towards the best perfection there is for us. We are, then, to depend on ourselves and on our brethren, to look within for our help, our protection, our final consolation. We must look within, for there is nothing without. Is this a satisfying formula, one that corresponds to life as we know it? We cannot help asking questions. This spirit within, rich with all these sacred impulses—where did it come from? Are we to seek it in the original clash of atoms? If atoms are so enormously clever as to clash like this, to go on clashing into ever higher forms of life, to clash till they produce art, science, religion, till they give us holiness and Christ, surely we should start a new religion, and establish the worship of the atom. Can we believe that the mind, as we have it, can come from anything inferior to mind; that love is born of aught less than Love?

Is it a matter of the human experience that suffering rules out God? It is in suffering that so many of us find Him—find Him, be sure, not as an impassive Being, who sits on high, enjoying His own happiness while His creatures endure; but One who is in it all, who has emptied Himself, limited His power, entered into our human conditions, who bears for us, bears in us all our pains, who carries this cross not in history only, but in every human heart. Against our diplomat's formula of despair let us put that of R. L. Stevenson, a sufferer also, if ever there was one, diseased from the beginning, driven from place to place in the wide world by pressure of the malady which finally killed him. He has that first revolt; have we not all had it? But his deeper experience tells another story:

"I cannot forgive God for the sufferings of others. . . But when I consider my own fate, I grow conscious of His gentle dealing. All those whom I now pity with indignation are perhaps not less fatherly dealt with than myself."

And again:

"If I, from my spyhole, looking with purblind eyes upon the least part of a fraction of the universe, yet perceive in my own destiny some broken evidences of a plan, and some signals of an over-ruling Goodness, shall I then be so mad as to complain that all cannot be deciphered?"

To our thinking, at least, the prophets of negation have been reading the universe the wrong way. They find the truth about it to be a bare, barren and soulless affair. To get the truth we must belittle everything; squeeze out of our hearts all the hopes, the faiths, the aspirations we find lurking there. There is so much less good in life than we thought!

Is this a reasonable idea? It is surely reading the book backwards. What is science teaching us? Always that the universe is bigger than we thought. The atom! We thought it just an atom. Now we find it to be a sort of planetary system, a centre of force, with electrons whirling round it at inconceivable velocities. In every direction where we penetrate we find wonders upon wonders; in the commonest things hid treasures of beauty and delight. And if this be so in the physical world, by what law are we condemned to reverse all this in the world of thought and feeling, of conscience and the spiritual life? If analogy is worth anything, shall we not say that this realm also may be more than we thought; that our formula errs by being too narrow instead of two wide? If the power of the universe is beyond imagination, may not we believe the love in it, the final goodness, is on a similar scale? If infinite power, why not infinite love? Shall we not trust our highest moments here rather than our lowest? The love in our hearts; the glimpses we get of what holiness may be; the passionate thirst for a highest we dimly see—may we not trust these as touching a reality which is vaster? The real formula of life is beyond us here. Victor Hugo, in his stupendous poem "Dieu," gives us perhaps the final word. After describing the steps by which man in successive ages has wrought out his conception of God, he comes to the final word. The poet meets a Shape, who said:

"'What sleeping man can know, thou knowest. Dost thou wish to reach the goal, to see the invisible, the unnamed, the ideal, the real?' Yes! I cried. He touched my brow with his finger, and I died."

XI

THE SOMETHING BEHIND

THERE is always something behind, always something more than you see. Out on the cliff yonder a coastguardsman is waving a flag ; it flashes up and down, to right and left. To your eye it is simply a mechanical movement ; but you know it is more than that. The movements are thoughts—thoughts flying across the sea to that distant vessel, which is sending back answering movements which are also thoughts. You turn up an Arabic manuscript. To the uninitiated eye it shows as a mass of ink-marks, a series of curves and straight lines. To the scholar these are also thoughts, hidden behind the ink. You walk amongst your fellows, and scan the crowd of faces. It is the most wonderful sight in the world, and that chiefly because what you there see hints at so immense an unseen. Behind those separate inches of surface, if only you could penetrate there, what worlds would disclose themselves ! Back of every face, what histories !—histories that, properly told, probed to their innermost, would beat all the novels that ever were written. And the wide world itself, the spectacle of nature that meets our eyes ; vast in itself, how much vaster by what it conceals ! The table we write on, the walls that enclose us, so familiar, so commonplace, are that because we see only their surfaces. Get down to their interior, to the atoms of

which they are composed, and we should find there the realms of whirling forces, chained forces, that if we knew how to liberate and use them, would be equal to all the world's work that is now being done, a thousand times over. And even there, amid all this realm of hidden forces, we should still be only at the surface. The Eastern thinker, puzzling, as he has been doing these thousands of years, over the nature-problem, sees it all as a mere shadow; to him it is *Maya*, illusion; to him the only real world is the world of mind, of the spirit. This, to us Westerners, is an extravagance of thinking. The outer world, the sphere of the senses, is real enough. but our best thought is, in its turn, conceding that the visible is only the forecourt of reality; the essential, the realest real, is that which lies behind.

Ah, that world behind! All we see is its one vast note of interrogation. It asks our answer to it. As we walk out on a spring morning, and behold the trees clothing themselves—the oak, the ash, the elm, putting on their dainty attire, the chestnut throwing up its milk-white cones, the laburnum with its golden gleam, the meadows pied with daisies, the bluebells showing as though the heavens were coming up through the earth; as the eye drinks in all this, "What is it?" we ask, "but an appeal, a question?" For this is beauty, and what is beauty? It is a question which materialism can never answer. It is so essentially an affair of the soul. If there were no soul in nature, it would assuredly have never found that language. Huxley, impressed as he was by all the contrary arguments, found this one unanswerable. Wilfrid Ward quotes him as saying:

"One thing which weighs with me against pessimism, and tells for a benevolent Author of the universe, is my enjoyment of scenery and music. I do not see how they can have helped in the struggle for existence. They are gratuitous gifts."

Assuredly you cannot get beauty, the idea and the sense of it, out of anything less than a soul. Our appreciation of it in nature is the response of one soul to another. Nature feeds her children according to their capacities. The ox, with eager tongue, mows its way through the lush grass; the landscape means just that to it, a provision for its stomach. The deeper thing behind is for that higher child of hers; the child who thinks, and feels, and understands. Were our understanding deeper, our feeling finer, what greater revelations would await us there! The greater our soul, the grander, the more wonderful would be the unveiling of that soul behind. Even with our present endowment, our first serious glance below the surface shows us a world that is crammed with mind. The stone you hold in your hand, what is it but a mass of congested thoughts? For see, it has existence, a present, a past, a future; it has shape, coherence, weight, colour, divisibility. But all these things are ideas; they have no meaning except as appeals, signals from one mind to another. That they set you thinking, and in this way, arises from nothing else than that they began with thinking—the thinking of another mind, that started the business long before you did. Even Herbert Spencer comes to that. In one of his latest works he says:

"The conception to which the exploration of nature everywhere tends is much less that of a universe of dead matter than of a universe which is everywhere alive."

But the something behind becomes more intimate in its interest when we view it in relation to man and his history. There is ample room here for cynicism if one were disposed that way. Man learned early to hide himself, and that often for sinister reasons. We remember Talleyrand's dictum that language was invented to conceal thought. And so true is Machiavelli's saying: "Everything sees that which you seem; but few know what you are." There are people one meets every day whose words and overt actions invariably set you wondering what they are really after; what is the hidden motive behind those smooth phrases. That hidden human world, the world of hypocrisy, of deceit, of counterfeit, is a real world enough. Man, taken in the lump, is a creature who so often deserves whipping. But there is another side to all that. For this queer and noisome region is not, even in the worse specimens, the innermost of man. Penetrate still deeper—in your neighbour and in all history—and you reach a something behind that is a good deal more interesting and far more hopeful. It is a bold thing to say, and yet we say it, that the heart of humanity, when we get there, is always a revelation of great things—the feeblest beginnings, the bare germs of them it may be—but there nevertheless. Let us, in one or two different directions, follow this "something behind" of history, and see how our assertion is borne out.

There are things in history which to the twentieth century may seem the most grotesque; but they are grotesque only so long as we look at their mere outside. Take the question of the mediæval pilgrimages. The pilgrim habit has dropped out among us, but

for long centuries it was the greatest thing in Christendom. All the world seemed afoot. Men started off to Treves, to Loretto, to Constantinople, to Jerusalem, and walked most of the way. Here in England there was scarce a family, poor or rich, but had its pilgrims. They tramped to Glastonbury, to Wells, to Walsingham, to Canterbury. The attraction was the relics of saints and martyrs. There was a canonical law which insisted that a church should possess relics as a condition of being consecrated, and the relics were the church's great treasure. Some of them were queer enough. Horace Walpole tells of a church in Italy where he was shown a specimen of the worm that never dies preserved in a bottle of spirits! The pilgrims were a very mixed company. Chaucer, in "The Canterbury Tales," has given us a description of them, which is recognised to-day as truer to the actual life of the times than almost anything in history. The mixed motives and the mixed character of these wayfarers stand vividly before us in the caustic account which Erasmus gives us of his visit to our Lady of Walsingham. After kneeling a while in prayer the pilgrim arose and deposited his offering, which was immediately taken up by a priest, "to prevent the next-comer from stealing it when depositing his own coin"! Chaucer is terrible in his satire, and Erasmus not less. And their satire was so well founded. But when we have gone through all that, and given it its due weight, what after all is the real bottom of this pilgrimage, the something behind? Selfishness, you say; they hoped to get something good out of it for their bodies or their souls. But are you there quite at the end of the business? There is a question here. How did the shrine, the relic,

come to possess its sacredness, its supposed efficacy? Was it because of its wealth, of its royal or other endowment? There was wealth there, and often royal endowment. But they were not the shrine; they were the offerings to it. The relic itself was perhaps a mouldering bone, or a hair, or the rag of a garment. And it had become sacred, miraculously virtuous, because of its association with some dead man or woman who had exhibited the higher virtues. The shrine, in short, was sacred to the great qualities of the human spirit; to self-sacrifice, to loving service, to the spirit of holiness. This ultimately was the charm, the magnet which drew the whole world. Was it an ignoble one? Was it not rather an outstanding illustration of the same human instinct by which "we needs must love the highest when we see it"? The soul still steers by the stars.

That is a something behind in what are called the ages of faith. Has it occurred to us ever to look behind what are known as epochs of negation, of unbelief? The supposed unbelief is often something so very different from unbelief. Lamartine, in discussing the time of the French Revolution, observes that the heroes of it, in their rejection of the Church, were not neglecting goodness or lofty ideals. It was a revolt rather against corruption, against hypocrisy; a cry for something better than they saw. "They reared altars in their hearts towards a faith of the future." Is not that what Feuerbach, religious anarchist as he seems, really means in his saying:

"Yet he alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being—*e.g.*, love, wisdom, justice—are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing!"

Take even the most clamant example of what is called antitheism, the redoubtable Proudhon. The man rages against God.

"God is evil. If God exists He is essentially hostile to our nature. We attain to science in spite of Him; to society in spite of Him. Every step forward is a victory in which we crush the Deity."

But who or what is the God against whom these words are thundered? We want to know what it really was that stirred this man's wrath; this man, the indefatigable worker for the poor and the oppressed; whose heart bled for, and whose tongue and pen unselfishly fought for, the sufferers, the disinherited? Assuredly it is not the God we know. Have there not been in the compass of Church theology as many false gods almost as we find in paganism? What this man thirsted for was justice, the good of the whole. And what he saw in the organised State religion was a dogma and an influence that denied this, and fought against it. Could he have seen it—he did come to see it later—his rebellion against the conventions which give a pious sanction to wrong-doing in high places, and shut the door of hope against the unenfranchised toilers, was much nearer the Christianity of Christ than was the orthodoxy which he shocked.

One of the ways in which orthodoxy has so often misrepresented religion has been in its habit of stopping short; of not going far enough; of not getting behind. We have just spoken of justice. Theology has had much to say about justice. It has given us theories of the Atonement in which the claims of justice and of mercy have been placed in a sort of antagonism; and theories of punishment in

which eternal suffering has been declared to be the justice of God against sinners. It would have been vastly worth while if theologians, in propounding these doctrines, had taken the trouble to examine what really is meant by justice. What do we mean by it in any human government? Do we find it ever associated there with wrath or punishment as an essential attribute of government? Nothing of the kind. It is not fundamental at all. Justice there means simply a method of securing the happiness, the general well-being, of the governed. Human law punishes evil-doers not from any spite or wrath against them, but simply as a preventive of wrong-doing; it uses terror for the good of everybody, the bad people included. It would frighten them into sane courses if there is no other way. A governor who inflicted tortures on people for the mere sake of torturing, would be hounded out of society. The worst tyrannies have only supported themselves on the plea that their severity was needed in the general interest. It seems almost beyond belief that sane men, pious men, should have credited God with a method of government too impossibly bad for the worst despotisms; have figured Him as creating a prison-house for souls which is not a reformatory but a damnation—an abode where the eternal suffering is to create nothing better than an agony with no hope in it—an agony whose fruits are not repentance, but only the rage of despair. Assuredly the Proudhons, the religious nihilists, in the way of heaping insults on God, have never, in their wildest moments, approached the theologians!

But here, again, let us not repeat the theologic sin of stopping short. We shall do the theologians a

grievous injustice if we fail to get behind what they have said. You read Jonathan Edwards's terrible sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"; or some of the awful paragraphs on hell in Mr. Spurgeon's earlier discourses. You read and shudder as you read. But go a little beyond the words; go into the inner thought, the soul of the preacher. These men were noble souls, full of the love of God and of the love of their fellows. Would God we had more such in our midst to-day! Had they, as they spoke of torture, any desire to inflict torture? Their one aim was to save men from it. They spoke of wrath in the sheer interest of love. They preached hell with no other thought than to get men to heaven; to get heaven into them. But go a little farther yet. If this was the thought behind the sermon, what was behind the thought? How came these men to agonise over the condition of their fellows; labour thus for their reclamation? Their own account of it carries you always back to God as the source of their own good, and their desire for others' good. It was He who stirred them to their mission —the mission of saving. And surely when we have reached this point we have got far enough! If their anxiety for human welfare was the reflection, the outcome of the Divine anxiety, have we not said all here that needs be said? If there is a Divine anxiety for these worst sinners, can we imagine it as ever ceasing? Could God ever cease to love and yet be God? The mystery of sin is great; so is the mystery of the future. But in considering them let us never stop at words, nor at appearances. Press the matter to its ultimate bound; press through all the evils, all the hells, and all the devils, and you

shall reach something greater than them all, and which shall be victorious over them all. *Quis separabit?* who or what shall separate us from the love of God?

The something behind is, we say, always greater than the thing that is. Every existence is a prophecy of the more to come. Vegetation is a miraculous advance on the solid earth which produced it. On the top of this vegetable world appears the animal life which feeds upon it; the animal, containing all the mystery of the vegetable, with something more. Out of the animal grows the man—with all these lower life spheres inside him, and a new life all his own on the top of these others. The ascent goes on. Into the midst of humanity comes Christ, with a new thing in Him, so great, so wonderful, that men, in describing it, find all the human categories unavailing, and can speak of it only in terms of God. And so man, in history, has already transcended humanity. The limits are down and we still march on. The something behind continues its forward push. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." But we are in a world of hope; for it is the world of God.

XII

CHURCH AND THEATRE

Between these two there has been an age-long controversy. The latest phase of it is between the theatre and the section of the Church known as Nonconformity. It is quite as well that these two should thresh the matter out. There have been and are vast misunderstandings on both sides. There is between them a deplorable confusion of issues. Each has nursed its own special blindness to obvious facts. For generations the two have been confronting each other, mainly in a hostile attitude, and the hostility is by no means over. Hard words have been exchanged. Nonconformist representatives accuse the stage of worldliness, irreligion, immorality. The stage retorts upon Nonconformity with charges of narrowness, of ignorance, of failure to appreciate the new conditions of the drama and of the time. The Free Churches are told, in a spirit of hardly veiled contempt, that they are non-representative both of the true spirit of religion and of the best thought of the age. It is time these two should have a free talk. They have each to learn a good deal. Indeed, they have each, of late years, been learning some things which have not yet been publicly avowed. There has been a sneaking acquaintance going on between them, with, as the result, on one side at least—the Non-

conformist side—a great change of private feeling ; a re-discussion, in a multitude of religious minds, of ancient opinions and principles, the judgment on which has not yet reached the surface, has perhaps hardly as yet been reached at all. It is time that judgment *was* reached, and frankly declared. In what follows we propose to help that process by a glance at the history of this business, and at the principles which seem to emerge from the facts of the case. We are at present in a confusion which, in the interests of both parties, and of the world in general, it is time were disentangled.

What is the history of Christianity in relation to the drama ? In the first place, it has to be said that the drama is older than Christianity. We have no direct guidance on this question from the New Testament, from the simple fact that from end to end of the book it is not even mentioned. There was no drama in Palestine. The Jews from the earliest time at which we meet them had no plays, no theatre ; their genius did not lie that way. But the world's education, as everyone now admits, has not been confined to Jewry. There has been here, as in most other things, a sub-division of labour. Across the blue Mediterranean, in the sunny realms of Greece, another department of the human culture —the cult of the intellect, of the arts, and of beauty —was being carried on with an unexampled splendour of achievement. In these two lands, separated only by a few leagues of sea, were being carried on, almost unknown to each other, the two great, equally vital processes of the human learning—the discipline of the intellect, the discipline of the soul. In these later ages, men, according to the differences of their

temperament and training, have disputed as to which contribution was the greater. At the Renaissance men turned from Palestine to Greece. Its literature, rediscovered, was a revelation which fascinated the ardent minds of the time. And since we have had prophets—Goethe at one period of his evolution, Keats, and Swinburne in our own day—who have bidden us reject the one for the other, as an authority upon life. Goethe learned better later ; and we have learned better. We have found that the two are not opponents, but allies—their lessons alike necessary to the complete endowment of the soul.

But Greece, ages before Christianity, had its drama, and, so far as this discussion is concerned, the singular and significant thing is that, in Greece, the drama, so suspected later by religious minds, was its religion ; if not the altar, at least the pulpit of it. In Æschylus, in Sophocles, in Euripides you have its preachers. It was in their plays, read and publicly performed, the Greek mind discussed its profoundest problems, problems of life, of morality, " of fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute." It was, it must be confessed, a somewhat gloomy religion, a rather terrible theology ; men and women pursued by fate, possessed by demonic powers which tempt them to hideous crimes, and then pursue and punish them with relentless fury. And in this obsession the women came out the worst. What terrible creatures they were : Medea, Clytemnestra, Electra ! There is the modern woman's question there, treated by Aristophanes in the " Lysistrata" in a manner quite impossible for the modern ear. But that was the Greek way. Call, however, this religion and their treatment of it a good one or a bad one, it was their

religion, their interpretation of man and the universe. It was where the Greek thought reached its deepest and its highest. It would certainly never have occurred to this people to regard the drama as irreligious. That would have been like telling the Jew that Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah were irreligious.

Christianity, we say, in its first authoritative documents, has nothing about the drama, and that because there was no drama in its midst to discuss. But later, when the Church had come out and spread through the Roman world, we have enough on the subject. The Christian Fathers were dead against the Roman theatre, against, in fact, the whole range of its amusements. And we see very clearly the reasons for that. For one thing, the early Christians had no need of the Roman amusements. They had quite enough excitement in their lives without these stimulants. The absorbing interests of their new, wonderful faith; the intimate, loving fellowships which their common life developed amongst them, and the constant mortal perils amongst which they moved, were enough of themselves to fill mind and heart. Their religion, in those beginnings of it, was necessarily exclusive. It could have reached its strength, gained its footing in a hostile world in no other way. What they knew of the shows was in the way of contributing as victims to the amusement of the populace. And, besides, the theatre of the time, the spectacles, the exhibitions to which it was allied, were wholly bad. Terence and Plautus, as we study them to-day in cold print, are anything but edifying reading. We can imagine what their effect was when delivered with every artifice of trick

and licentious gesture by actors who, in the public opinion of that day, were reckoned among the lowest dregs of society. The theatre was part of the shows, of the spectacles of the time, of a scheme of amusement that to-day would excite nothing but horror in any civilised community. Cicero, in a letter to Marcus Marius, expresses his disgust at their sheer barbarity. To look at them was pollution. Augustine describes how his friend Alypius, dragged by companions in Rome to one of these shows, "kept his eyes shut, hating it; but at a cry, opening them, was seized with a passion for blood." Here was no place for the Christian. The Church's protest was a protest against lust and savagery; a protest which mightily helped to clean the world.

Later on, in the mediæval age, we have a curious development. The Church had emerged from the struggling stage and had become master. It had absorbed the Roman civilisation, and the Roman civilisation had absorbed it. From a feeble, isolated sect, it had become, over vast populations, the controller and director of life. And life, human life, contains amongst other things, the dramatic instinct. We all have it as children, and it does not die out as we grow up. The impulse to reproduce, to express by picture and spoken word the great scenes, the great characters that move us; to make in this way the past live again; to exhibit, by voice and gesture, by vivid movement, the stirring realities of life—its humour, its pathos, its tragedy—this is a common inheritance; in some, an over-mastering passion. And the mediæval Church, now the most potent of social factors, had discovered this. It bestirred itself to give its public all it needed, all that human

nature called for. It gave it spectacle ; it was itself a spectacle, in its glorious buildings, its statues, its pictures, its solemn music. And it went one step further ; it gave it the play. The Church miracle-plays were one of the most extraordinary developments of that time. Designed in the first place to bring the great truths of religion in the most impressive manner before the populace, they soon developed all the characteristics of the stage, including the broadest and coarsest farce. The accounts of some of these performances are almost incredible. A favourite representation was that of heaven and hell, and it was treated as a comedy. On the stage, erected in the market-place, a raised platform, on which were seated white-robed peasant girls, stood for heaven. A big hole in the corner was the opening to the infernal regions, down which certain of the performers, trussed and bound, were pitchforked amid the roars of the audience. In the intervals were comic songs. Stage highwaymen and cut-throats went through a pantomime of their professions. In one play, called *Les Trois Rois* (" The Three Kings "), there was a scene from the Crucifixion. During the tragedy God the Father was shown as lying intoxicated. He is roused, and told that His Son is dead. " *Il est mort ! Le diable m'envole si je le savais !* " (" He is dead ! Devil take me if I knew it ! ") It seems all impossible to us. And yet all this was under Church auspices !

In those days the Church was, as we have said, the universal managing director of social life. Since then—and this is the crucial point—the whole movement of the world has been in the direction of an ever more accentuated division of labour. One

department after another has established itself independently, on its own footing. The care of the poor, education, literature, have in succession ceased to be a Church monopoly, and have started in business for themselves. So it was with the drama. At the Renaissance, following this instinct, Europe sought its inspirations outside Palestine. In England we see Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe as exponents of humanism. In France, Corneille and Racine reproduce the Greek classicism, Molière is frankly independent. His *Tartuffe* was regarded by the Church not simply as an exposure of hypocrisy, but as an attack on religion. It was this which drew upon him the terrible denunciation of Bossuet.

The Church gave birth to the mediæval stage, but after the Renaissance the alliance was over, and it has never been renewed. In France, after the classicists, we have had in succession the romanticists, the realists, the impressionists, by whom all the human questions have been treated, sometimes with profound seriousness, often with Voltairean mockery, but always with an entire independence of Church standards or authority. In England the course has been different. The Puritans did without the stage ; condemned it as an inferior and unworthy interest. Like the early Christians, they were too full of the compelling interests of religion ; too full of the immense excitements of the war they were waging, to have time or care for amusements of this class. They found other ways of expressing themselves. The pulpit was their stage ; and where that did not suffice, the battlefield, the sword and gun. But note what followed. The Puritans were a spiritual *élite*. For a time they ruled England, and

ruled it magnificently. But, as history has seen, though they ruled England they were not England. As the Restoration showed, they had not carried the people with them. Their express train went at a great rate ; but alas ! it had not properly linked itself to the carriages behind. It is significant that some of the worst profligates of the age that followed were children of the most austere Puritan families. The Restoration and post-Restoration stage, with its Congreve, its Wycherley, its Vanbrugh—the stage the vileness of which is exhibited for us in the scathing lines of the "Histriomastix"—was an inevitable reaction from a moral *régime* which had pressed too hardly on the average human nature of the time.

All this is now behind us, with many other things that have followed. Since then, we have had in England the Evangelical revival, the High Church revival, the Broad Church movement, the growth and consolidation of the Free Churches, the immense development of science under the guidance of evolution, the vast new outlooks which Biblical and historical criticism has introduced into the religious idea, the general growth of culture. All this has produced a momentous change in the human outlook. And in the meantime the Church and the theatre are still there, each an immense and living force. Have these changes produced any appreciable and intelligible modification of their mutual attitude ? Has the long history which we have here so hastily and imperfectly sketched taught us any lessons ? Can we find there any basis for the formation of a coherent and satisfying view of the whole position ? Some facts emerge from it, which, at least to our thinking, offer us some pregnant suggestions towards it.

For one thing, the survey we have gone through, as well as our own observation of ourselves, shows surely the possession in humanity of an irrepressible dramatic instinct which insists upon some form of expression. There is an instinct for this in us all; there is a genius for it in some. Diderot relates of Garrick that, in one of his visits to Paris, in a salon amongst some friends, he pulled together a curtain which hung in the room so that only his face was visible. He then, without uttering a word, solely by the changes in his countenance, exhibited in succession the emotions, first of rapture, then of joy, of merriment, of cheerfulness, of calm, of indifference, then of suspicion, of fear, of terror, up to utmost horror; afterwards reversing the process through all its stages. It was the most wonderful play of feature he had ever witnessed. Was that, we ask, a talent for which there was no public use? Let us remember, as a second fact, that some of the world's noblest spirits have used the drama as the expression of their weightiest, deepest thought. Germany has known no greater men than Goethe and Schiller, and they both did their best work in drama. The Elizabethan age is the glory of England, and the glory of that age was its dramatists. Hear Milton, our poet of eternity:

> "Then to the well trod stage anon,
> If Jonson's learnèd sock be on,
> Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
> Warble his native woodnotes wild."

Can there be anything intrinsically rotten in an institution which, in our day, Dickens and Tennyson so loved and served, convinced Christians both of them, and noblest strivers for all that was good?

Was the dramatic instinct all wrong in the great preachers—in Christmas Evans and Williams of Wern, of Wales ; in William Dawson, the Yorkshire Methodist ; in Father Taylor, of Boston—who in their sermons would sometimes dramatise the situation with such intensity as made the spell-bound hearers cry out in the extremity of joy or of terror ? Is not the speaker, the preacher, indeed, as someone has said, " an actor who speaks his own lines " ?

The truth is—and this is the clearest and the most insistent fact of all—we are victims just now of a false classification, or rather, shall we say, of an outgrown classification. The Church has long been cursed with bad definitions, and never more so than in the present instance. What do people mean when they say that the drama is un-Christian? They might just as well say that literature is un-Christian. Are there not bad books, worse in their suggestions, in their immoral tendency, than anything that has been produced on the stage ? And yet does anybody propose to lay an embargo on reading ? We have already reached our true classification here ; indeed, there has never been any deviation from it. We all read, who can ; we all believe in reading. But we speak, as we ought to do, of good literature and bad literature ; of reading that helps and reading that hurts. And that is precisely the definition we need on the question before us. What Christian people have to do now is to discriminate between the good play and the bad one ; to countenance the one and to denounce the other. And have we not the good theatre and the good play already ? Have we not good men writing plays, and acting them ? Did Mr. Barrie go to the bad when he passed from *Auld*

Licht Idylls to *The Little Minister* and *Peter Pan*? Are not his Covenanting ancestry and traditions, his religion, as well as his pawky humour, as conspicuous in these last as in the other? Was Irving any less of a preacher to his age than his friends, Ward Beecher and Dr. Parker? John L. Toole was as great a dispenser of wholesome laughter as Dickens; and was his humour ever associated with anything unclean? Was Tennyson a worse man when he wrote "The Cup" than when he composed "In Memoriam"? The theatre is here, a great and growing fact, enshrined in the affections of the people. And the business of the Church is to recognise the fact; to take its good and make it better; and to use its utmost power to purge the evil that still clings.

We write here—it may be necessary to say that—from a purely disinterested standpoint. There are some of us, ourselves in the number, who never enter a theatre from one year's end to another. We have other interests, so much more absorbing. Our time is so short, our work so urgent; our ignorance of this world and its wonders so great, our desire to learn so insistent, that we give this side of things the go-by, as something remote and foreign to our scheme of life. But who are we to impose our rule of living upon everybody else? There are millions of our fellow-men to whom amusements of this order are the best reaction they have yet found as against the grinding toil of their daily existence. Let them have their amusements—as the children have theirs. That, we remember, is not the only thing to be said. The theatre can teach, as well as amuse. And it often teaches far more effectively than a

droning pulpit. And, rightly handled, it will teach better than ever in the future. The point we insist upon is, to have done, and for ever, with bad definition and un-Christian judgments. The theatre has been wronged by the Church as much as the Church has been wronged by the theatre. It is time for the two to understand each other.

XIII

THE APPRECIATION OF LIFE

We are hearing from various sources of the decline of the English high spirits. People coming back from Canada, from Australia, discourse of our dulness, our dejection. Have we grown old as a nation? Is it that these younger peoples get more sun than we do? Or that over there you are in a country where everything is to be done, while here the big things have been done? Certainly, if we had to choose, we would rather be in an unfinished world than a finished one; and the Canadian, the Australian, surrounded with all manner of unrealised possibilities, with a thousand things to do, all promising rich rewards to the doer, has the advantage here over a country which, for a thousand years, has been levelled and rolled and parcelled out—this England which, to Emerson, coming from his half-wild America, seemed "finished off, not with a plough, but with a pencil." For man is essentially the maker, the doer, and is happiest when he is about the said doing. Put him into a completed heaven, with nothing for him there but to sit and gaze; he would prefer hell, with a chance of improving it. *Vivere est militare.* Life is a fight, and you can never get the full taste of it apart from the fighting conditions. The young countries, with their toils and hardships, and with their spring of health, their hopefulness, their

enthuiasm, are teaching us the lesson, not for nations only, but for every man and woman of us, that life's best gift is in its call upon our energy. That is why it is better to be born poor than rich; better to climb than to sit everlastingly upon the top.

There is no illusion greater than to suppose that ease and luxury bring happiness. Man was not made that way. As a cure-all for that illusion let anyone read, however cursorily, the literature of the inner life of the Courts of Europe during the last hundred years. (He might go back a thousand and find the same lesson.) Leibnitz once discoursed to the Queen of Sweden on "the infinitely little." "Mon Dieu," said the witty queen afterwards, "as if I did not know enough of that!" Go through the park in the season, or study the crowd at any fashionable resort. Watch the faces of these sitters, these loungers. You get miles of vapidity, of boredom. What is behind these wearied features; what style of thought, what quality of feeling? Do these people ever "laugh the heart's laugh"? For the real salt of life we would go rather to the honest boisterousness of "'Arry" and "'Arriet" on a Bank Holiday. An enormous weariness seems to have settled over modern civilisation. Eucken proclaims it of his Germany in all his books. They are an endeavour to shake his countrymen out of it. And the thing is in England, too. People have missed their happiness. They seek they know not what. Their game of life is like a fox hunt, where, after an enormous expenditure—two hundred guinea mounts, the upkeep of hounds, of huntsmen, the spoiling of crops, the occasional breaking of necks—the final result is—poor Reynard's little brush! The game,

at this price, seems hardly worth the candle! Is it the best game there is? We trow not.

In search of a better, we come back to that pregnant word of Madame Swetchine: "At bottom there is in life only what one puts into it." Our receptivity, our response to things—there is the whole business. The oyster has as big a universe round it as you have; the immensities, the eternities, compass it; all the histories are going on around it, the tragic, the sublime, the terrible; but it remains an oyster and nothing more. Amidst all the educations to-day—and we are full of education—the one department which is the most neglected is the most needed education of all—that in the faculty of appreciation. There is no one thing around you, of all the innumerables that compass our life, but is wonderful, in its way beautiful. But you will see no beauty till you learn to see. That stone: it has all the secrets of geology. Think what Kingsley found in a chalk pit; Huxley in a lump of coal! The life of the senses alone is such a boon as makes millionaires of all who possess it. What would Crœsus have given for his eyes had he been deprived of them? And yet yours are there this morning, and you have perhaps not thanked God for them! To use them on an April landscape:

> "When upon orchard and lane,
> Breaks the white foam of the Spring,"

is it not to possess as your own a picture worth all the art galleries of Europe? We have no patience with ascetics who despise the life of sense. It is so poor a compliment to Him who has given it, and who has provided so richly for its satisfactions. It is a religious act to enjoy a good dinner; just as it is a

religious act to be content without one. We like that quality of mind which Marcus Aurelius speaks of in his father: "who appreciated good things when they were there, and had an undisturbed cheerfulness when they were absent." Says Lamb, in one of his heady passages: "God bless me, here are the birds smoking hot! All that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight." Be sure that was his fun. You may cultivate the sourest of tempers on beans and water; while a relishful meal, above all when it has been well earned, come to with appetite and eaten with enjoyment, will do you good all over, body and soul.

But to appreciate life as it deserves we shall have to take some wider, deeper views of it than the senses can afford. Consider the wonder of it. We are here, born into this one glimpse of the eternities; not five thousand years ago, as we might have been, nor ten thousand years hence, but just now. And there is infinity within us, and infinity around us. We are part of an immensity which is all ours because we know it and feel it. Are we crushed with that immensity? Shall we, as we lift our eyes to the midnight stars, see there only

> "Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
> Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
> His nothingness into man"?

Are they not rather the sign and evidence of our greatness, in that we can count them, trace their movement, penetrate the secret of their history, place the height of our living soul against that of their dead masses? Do we say, we are of a moment, they of eternity? How foolish is all that! As if we were simply the size of our own present conscious-

ness! We are so much more than we know. There are in us depths of being beyond all our sounding. Our very bodies are of the stuff of eternity. They lived ages and ages ago; in the solid mountains, in the rolling seas, in the springs and summers of innumerable years. And our spirit, be sure that, too, was there; in what forms, under what aspects, we cannot say; but in some form, in some aspect, always there—in the vast circumference of God.

In another sense are we so much wider than our personal selves. Just as the whole visible universe mingles mysteriously with us, so, and much more closely, are we wed with humanity. We are intimately one with our race. That physically, for it has taken all the generations from the beginning of time—all the generations in their incessant crossing and intermingling—to make you and me. Had one of those far-off prehistoric ancestors, who carried his torch of existence "in the dark backward and abysm of time," failed of his life function, you and I had not been. And not less is it with the life of the soul. For us, to make us spiritually, were the first beginnings of thought, the making of alphabets, the making of literatures, the struggles of patriots, the death of martyrs, the creations of genius, the researches of science, the whole age-long struggle of the world. Had there been one struggle, one achievement less, you had been less than what you are. Lamennais, in a daring passage of the "Paroles d'un Croyant," speaks of humanity as being in itself the suffering son of God, bearing its cross, passing through its Gethsemane, ascending its Calvary, shedding its blood. And surely there is a truth there. And to grasp it is to feel the deepest

call to service. Shall we sit at this table of life, so richly furnished; furnished by the struggle, the blood and tears, the heroic sacrifices of our bygone brothers; shall we sit and selfishly eat there, without adding our share to that sacramental feast? Shall we take all and give nothing? Shall these martyrs fill history with their suffering and call out no martyr spirit in us?

Such poltroonery, where it exists, brings its own revenge. For we never touch the full enjoyment of life till we touch it as part of the whole. For it is only as we transcend ourselves that we can share in the rich banquet of the whole. It is only in that larger view that we touch life's deeper note. Then, standing outside the narrow range of a mere egoism, we rejoice in the strength of those stronger than ourselves, rejoice in the gifts of the more gifted, rejoice in the happiness of those happier than we. For now we see them as part of ourselves, as enrichers of that general life in which we are all common partakers. Goethe, who saw everything, saw this. Says he:

"If during our lifetime we see that performed by others to which we ourselves felt an earlier call, but had been obliged to give up, then the beautiful feeling enters the mind, that only mankind together is the true man; and that the individual can only be joyous and happy when he has the courage to feel himself in the whole."

We shall never truly appreciate life till we have come to terms with suffering. It is amazing that people should take a pessimistic view of pain. We owe nearly everything of moral value to it, and nearly everything of our actual enjoyment. It gives the richest flavour to our pleasures. What would a

calm be without the storm; what rest without fatigue; what the zest of food without hunger? Is there any joy equal to that of deliverance? But for that you must have the prisoning. He who has never had a toothache has missed something. What a natural history it is! That tiny bone of your jaw—faithful servant, do not forget, for so many years—has suddenly changed his character and become a foe. It is as if a good friend had been seized with madness, and hates and smites where before he loved. To dislodge him your dentist comes with cold steel. What a sensation: that iron grip, that grinding crash, as if the foundations of your being were torn up! But would you miss it? would you miss the pain? You cannot afford to. As an element of consciousness it is so well worth testing, if only to study it, still more to find yourself here one with all the pains, all the sufferings your fellows have endured. And then the moment after; the joy of deliverance; the knowledge that once more you can eat, and can sleep! What a new exquisite taste has come into those beforetime so common experiences. They have redoubled for you their value. And this poor tooth, this whilom faithful servant, that for a time went mad! The madness, after all, was temporary, was brief. It is mad no longer. There it lies, to pass, through endless changes, but always in the service of the world. The evil of it was a phase, the good of it eternal. And the evil itself was part of the good. Does anyone believe now that the future state of the blessed is one that knows nothing of suffering? What a banal, what a dull complacency were that! We prefer infinitely the view of the pious Rothe—to us

one of the best beloved of the Germans—that angels are our fellow spirits, who have passed through the toils and sorrow of our mortal state, to be purified and exalted by them; and whose joy now it is to share our pains and to work with us for the common redemption.

To appreciate life, to get at its fullest and deepest, we must make the best of our moment. But have you thought of that moment? It is in itself more than a present. It is also a past and a future. Both are in it, even in our consciousness. If we make a wrong past we shall make a wrong present. The past will be our greatest friend or our most terrible enemy. The good, the evil we do, comes all back upon us there; lodges in us, our bliss or our woe. How true is that word of Maeterlinck: "There is one thing that can never turn into suffering, and that is the good we have done." Arbuthnot, writing from his dying bed to his friend Swift, drops this as his verdict on a life-experience:

"I shall, to the last moment, preserve my love and esteem for you, being well assured you will never leave the paths of virtue and honour; *for all that is in the world is not worth the least deviation from the way.*"

But our moment has not only a past; it has also a future; and that, perhaps, is the greatest thing in it. Herein is it that we rise above the animal creation, find ourselves in another rank of being. This it is which makes death, the fact of it and the theory of it, a totally different thing from the mere brute-ending. It becomes, instead, a spiritual event. In earlier years our "forward-looking thoughts" are largely, and naturally, a worldly affair. We have all the visible life before us, and there is enough in

that to fill up most of the youthful mind. But what about the man of seventy ? It is singular that while theology and philosophy have been arguing incessantly about a future life, the greatest argument of all should have been almost overlooked. It is the argument from the shape of the soul, from the shape of our thought. Why is it that its edge is always turned forward ; that its watchword is " onward " ? That is as true of it at seventy as it is of twenty. And the forward look here is of keener interest, and of a larger significance. The world's affairs are over ; but the soul's affairs ? Is it possible that this ardent gaze, this look onward, on which are concentrated the mind's ripest faculties, is into a vacuity, and means nothing ? It has been said of the German Herder, that " in his latter years he panted after the invisible world, merely because the visible (as he often said) ceased to stimulate him." It is then, indeed, that the soul finds and knows its true home. As the earth on which we live, resting on nothing, is upheld by invisible forces, and carried by them easily through the immensities of space ; so the soul, detached from its grosser relationships, from its roots in the world, exulting in its new freedom, commits itself joyously to the invisible to which it belongs, secure of being carried by its powers into higher experiences in the holy realms of God.

XIV

THE NEXT THING

THIS seems an unpromising title ; a plunge into the commonplace, of which we have always so much more than enough. It calls up a vision of the counterman who, after our purchases, invites us to one purchase more. It is on our lips as we open the morning paper. " What next ? " we growl, as we encounter the latest annoyance. It is the expression of naïve surprise, or that shrug of the shoulders of the man who has ceased to be surprised at anything. But this commonest of our tools of speech is really in itself worth looking at. That it should have come into speech at all, that there should be in us a phase of thinking and feeling that calls for it, is, when we look deeper, a really singular, a deeply significant thing. So looked at it ceases to be common ; it faces us at once with the whole mystery of life, of our relation to reality.

Why should there be a next thing ? The mystery here is that there never is, for us, anything but the next thing. If only we could capture the present, and hold it for ever such a little while ! But we never can. As we watch our moment it is gone. It is all eternal movement. We would study the picture, but it will not stay to be studied. As we look it has changed ; it has disappeared, and another has taken its place. If our planet would only stop

once in a while! But it rushes on. Before we have ceased rejoicing at spring's lengthening day, the summer is on us, reaches its climacteric, and we are once more on the downward course. Within us it is the same. Our thought, our feeling, is an incessant movement. For us there were neither thought nor feeling without it. Our tenure of them is on condition that we lose what we had a moment ago. And they never repeat themselves. Our relation to reality is a pin-prick here and there, and then away. There must surely be another thought, another feeling, deeper and stronger, whose hold on reality is so much firmer than ours, whose relation to it is not the fleeting moment, but the eternal Now! It is thus that, when we begin to think about thought, we have to postulate God.

Our world history, as we study it, is found to be a continual production of the next thing. From that study men have deduced what they call the laws of nature. We see a grand uniformity. The sun goes on rising and setting; the waters run down hill; fire burns; cold contracts; heat expands. From certain antecedents you get certain consequences. If you attach a match to gunpowder it explodes. You may repeat the experiment a thousand times, and with the same result. You can calculate here with tolerable certainty on the next thing. Out of all this men have constructed a doctrine of materialistic necessity. Things are thus and nobody can make them otherwise. They have carried it into the region of mind and will. They find in them the last phase of material evolution. "All thought is from phosphorus." Sensation is a nervous reaction. As to willing, if you could find out all a man's ante-

cedents and all the facts of his environment, you could predict what he would do. We are in a closed circle. The next thing, in the world's happenings, and in your happenings, is just a link in the chain of necessity.

But this doctrine, so widely prevalent during the last half-century, is rapidly going by the board. And it is science, which first led us into the *impasse*, that is now showing us the way out. A clearer mental science for one thing. Things are thus ; but why they should be thus is, we see, quite another question. A given impact produces a given sensation, but why it should produce that sensation, who knows ? Why there should be this order of nature, against a thousand other possible ones, again, who knows ? The notion, too, that the order of nature is a closed circle, that the next thing is always predictable, is being shown to be an illusion. Darwin's confession that the variation in species was in itself inexplicable made a hole in the necessitarian doctrine which has never been filled up ; which, indeed, has been widening ever since. The researches of De Vries and other German scientists, which show that in the plant world the variation is a sudden one, in the nature of a surprise, is the last note in evolution, and it opens up a whole world of possibilities. Evolution has here, as it was bound to do, struck upon the supernatural. The " next thing," not in the plant world only, but, as we are discovering, in world history, in human history, is always a surprise. It cannot be accounted for by the known antecedents. The result is always more than what came before it. Something new is ever being produced. Upon the known is the incessant play of the unknown. The invisible force

which makes a new plant possible in botany is what makes possible a new man in history. It is here that science and theology join hands. It is because life is seen rising stage above stage, each unaccountable by anything which has gone before—each drawing into itself all that has gone before, but adding something beyond and above—that the scientist can hail the ascent of vegetable to animal, of animal to man; and that the Christian can find in Christ, and, through Him, in himself, the ascent of man to God.

There is then, it seems, a freedom even in matter which the earlier scientists knew not of. The next thing is, after all, not so easily predictable. We find this still more in the mind and the will. Man has always been inwardly sure of the freedom of the will, even when his reason seemed to deny it. It was as Dr. Johnson put it; "All theory is against it, all experience is for it." To-day we are getting beyond that stage. We are justifying it to the reason. Bergson's analysis has shown us where the old mistake came in; the old mistake of studying the will by the thing done, and judging that by the false analogy of space and of mechanism, instead of judging as we should, by the act itself when it is adoing; by catching the consciousness while it is at work, which gives us the verdict of freedom.

How is the soul free? Not, as has been excellently put, "when it is at the mercy of every random impulse, but when it is acted upon by congenial forces, when it is exposed to spiritual pressure, to constraint within itself." Let us take a concrete instance. Take a high-souled man who is injured or insulted by his fellow. How will he act? What will be here the next thing? The natural reaction,

the instinctive movement will be one of revolt, of paying back in like coin. That lies nearest to the animal in him, and he feels it all. But will it determine his action? Will that actually come next? There is a beautiful story which D'Aguesseau, a French Advocate-General of the seventeenth century, tells of his father: "Naturally of a quick temper," his son says of him, "when under provocation one saw him redden and become silent at the same moment; the nobler part of his soul allowing the first fire to pass without word said, in order to re-establish straightway that inner calm and tranquillity which reason and religion had combined to make the habit of his soul." There you have the thing taken from the life; the trained soul caught in the entire fineness of its action. The whole philosophy of the spirit is there; the higher nature constructing its next thing, not from the grosser impulses, but from the free obedience it pays to the highest that is in it.

These are the noble successes of the soul—the things that are best to learn from. But there is a whole chapter of its failures, and these also are to be noted. There is a deadly progression in evil, as well as in good; in evil, which also is ever demanding its next thing. It will not stop with what it has done; it must do more. You begin with your stimulant, and then you increase the dose. Yesterday's excess is not enough for to-day. That is true of all intoxications, whether of the flesh or of the mind. Tiberius offered a reward for a new pleasure. He had run through all he knew, and the craving was worse than ever. Why could not Napoleon stop at the point he had reached? Surely it was enough—he, a few years before a nobody, the son of a nobody, now at the top

of Europe ; with France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, the peninsula all at his feet ! No, he must have the next thing, and so comes Moscow, the ruin of his army, the break-up of his empire.

We have to-day in England an illustration of the fatal movement of the next thing—when the thing is a wrong one—which some of us contemplate with a feeling beyond words. The woman's movement is one on which we had looked with such infinite hope. Her entry into politics was surely to idealise politics, to lift it out of the brutalities in which man had so often dragged it, into something purer, tenderer, more human. We saw in it the abolition of war, the care of the children, of the needy, the Christianisation of the State. And we believe it still means all that. And then some of its leaders, impatient in their ardour, take a first false step. They forsake the weapons of argument, of reason, of their true feminine influence, for the inferior one of violence. They exchange the weapons of the spirit for the arm of flesh. Did they think when that first step was taken of the law of the next thing ? The first violences fail ; then there must be more violences ; the blows must be harder, the destruction more widespread. And the inner state must follow the same law. The first animosity must deepen into hate, until hate passes into delirium. And this amazing thing takes place in England, of all countries in the world. Not in revolutionary France, not in Nihilist Russia, not in the inflammable southern races, but in England—the practical, the law-abiding, the home, supposed, of common sense ! Have these people, one wonders, studied the history of civilisation ; have they studied Christianity ? They suffer

for their cause ; they suffer heroically. But not as the martyrs of the spirit have suffered, not as the heroes of the ideal. The early Christian women suffered ; their martyrdoms were the most wonderful of all. We see young women, girls, offering themselves with a smile to the Roman torture, yielding their limbs to the claw of the wild beast. But their fight was always a suffering, never the infliction of it. Their weapons were the weapons of faith, of courage, of dauntless patience, not the stone, the firebrand ; words of love and pity, never the words of calumny, of hate. How well they understood their business ! The ideal was to be won by nothing less than the ideal. The soul must win by the soul's strength. Lactantius gives us their plan of campaign : " Let the heathen imitate us Christians ; no one is retained among us against his will. Religion is to be defended, not by killing, but by dying." May we not hope that the next thing in this piteous business will be a return to that older, better way ? Has not history shown us that it is the only way ? There are a thousand ways down, but assuredly there is no other way up.

But there are some other, and happily, less controversial sides, of this theme. It is a touchstone of the morality of our everyday life. The next thing ; what is it to be ? There are so many of them, and such enticing ones—an extra half-hour in bed ; the new novel, which we closed last at its most exciting part ; the evening out, which will cost time and money, but provides its dose of excitement. On the other side there is that tough piece of work which waits to be done ; that tangled mass of detail which needs to be straightened out ; that service of help

which we have promised and not yet touched. Let us offer here a rule of life which has been proved by long experience. Take your toughest job first; let the pleasure wait till the duty be done; of your morning callers, let old Disagreeable, or even if his card bear the name of Odious, have your first interview. Met promptly and bravely, your difficulty, your disagreeable, even your odious, will lose their ugliness, they will drop their mask of repulsion, and disclose themselves as the best of friends and helpers. It is part of the humour of life that the soul's best friends come to it first in masquerade. They test our courage, our perception, by putting on a stern and forbidding aspect. How glad they are when they see we have discovered the jest; that we know them for what they are! Penetrate their disguise; bid them come in; give welcome to duty, to toil, to fatigue, to the troublesome, the difficult, and your fortune is made. You have annexed the finest apparatus of living, the surest instruments of success.

The next thing! Who knows what it is going to be? We can predict eclipses, assign the moon's position at a given day and hour, be wise about a thousand things in nature. The one thing where our ignorance is absolute is as to what is going to happen to you or to me to-day or to-morrow. A singular position this, surely, to move incessantly to the encounter of the unknown! You and the event! Through all the ages you have been travelling to meet each other. The thing that is going to make or mar you—at least, to change you immeasurably—untracked, invisible, is moving on to the point where it will cross your path! It may be the lover whose

face you will see to-day for the first time; or an accession of fortune; a death; or perhaps a book that will fall into your hands. Ignatius Loyola, the gay young knight of Spain, meets on a given day at Pampeluna a cannon ball which breaks his leg. That is one life encounter. As he lies in hospital, to help along the weary hours he opens a book, "The Lives of the Saints." He reads of Augustine and Jerome; of Dominic and St. Francis. He reads, and his life is fixed for him. He drops the knight and becomes the saint, the world-shaking spiritual leader. Surely in life there is nothing so awesome as this: the wedding of our soul to that outside thing, now on its way, which is to be our destiny! Let us be sure it is on an appointed way; that its mission is not a chance, but a Providence. Can we offer a better petition for our morning prayer than this: O God, prepare us this day for what Thou art preparing for us!

The next thing is never the same as the last thing. History, on the large scale or the small—your history or the world's—does not repeat itself.

> "Nothing can be as it has been before,
> Better, so call it, only not the same."

And shall we not say that it is better; that the movement is an advance? The route is often a circuitous one, with halts, with lapses, with puzzling detours to left and right. Nature, as Lessing says, often takes us the long way round instead of by the short cut, and has her reasons for it. But there is no mistaking the general line of movement. The fact that humanity is perpetually obsessed by its ideal is the surest guarantee of its upward destiny. The

ideal, flaming before it—its pillar of fire in the wilderness—guides it surely towards Canaan. For the ideal, as Fouilleé puts it, "is but the deepest sense and anticipation of future reality." And may we not, with him, dismiss the notion that it is not real because it is distant: "*Quoi! ce n'est pas réel parceque c'est lointain!*"

Some day we shall reach the point where, for us, the next thing will be a step into the invisible. So simple, yet so great a thing! In that hour we shall have nothing to do, but everything to experience. Nature will take us by the hand and lead us through the great portal. She will deal with us, be sure, as gently as when she brought us, a little child, into this world—where she brought us into the centre of a home, into a circle of those who loved us. We like that saying of old Walton in his life of Donne: "In the last hour of his last day, as his body melted down and vapoured into spirit." Dying should be our last, best act of faith. It calls for faith, but the faith has such good reasons. We have experienced too much of God's goodness in this life to anticipate aught else in any other. Said Kant once in his later days to a circle of his friends:

"Gentlemen, I do not fear to die. I assure you, as in the presence of God, that if, on this very night, suddenly, the summons to death were to reach me, I should hear it with calmness, and should raise my hands to heaven and say, Blessed be God!"

Why not? We bless God for our life, which is His gift. Shall we not also bless Him for death, which, be sure, is no lesser gift?

XV

SOLITUDE

De Quincey once said that he had spent more of his life in deliberately planned and calculated solitude than any man he had met or heard of. He had chosen solitude in the interest of his work. De Quincey's ways were altogether extraordinary, but we can scarcely allow his claim here. There have been greater solitaries than he. The opium eater was, after all, a married man, and he did see his family sometimes. What was he, after all, a solitary compared with those eremites of the Thebaid, men who left their homes, their cities, the sight of their fellow men, to dwell in the awful silences of the stony desert, in search of themselves and God! Jerome, a monk himself, in a terrible passage, paints for us a picture of this weirdest of religious ideals.

> "Though your mother, with hair unbound and garments torn, points to the breast that nourished you; and though your father lie on the threshold, tread over him with dry eyes and take the flag of Christ."

That is, become an anchorite. And in India to-day there are Brahmans who, at a given age, following their ancestral tradition, leave wife and family and retire to the woods, to remain there to the end, in lonely contemplation of eternal things. Every age, indeed, and every country, has had men of this type. Theirs, indeed, is but the exaggeration of an instinct,

of a passion of the soul. The cult of solitude, in its measure, is, indeed, a healthy, an essentially human thing. Solitude is one of the great gifts of life, a precious part of our inheritance as spiritual beings. No one will ever know the best in himself or in his world, the real fulness of existence, until he has entered deeply into its experiences. Solitude is the greatest of educators, but it requires an education to understand it, to secure its treasures.

It is becoming more and more difficult in our time to be solitary. The world, as a habitation, is losing its old lonelinesses. You go to the Arctic or the Antarctic Pole to find that a Peary and an Amundsen have been there before you. There are scarcely any unexplored deserts. In our boyhood's days we read with bated breath the story of Daniel Boone, the grim, silent hunter of the trackless Kentucky forest. Kentucky to-day is an affair of towns and railroads, of busy manufactures. The " Great Lone Land " of forty years ago is thick with Canadian settlers. American farmers are trekking from the Far West because it is getting overpeopled. Australia is projecting lines through its central wilderness. If things progress at this rate, future generations will be contending for standing room. All our civilisation is against the silences. Men herd together in cities. Our industrial arrangements are a cult of the mob life. The workers are massed in factories, in shops and warehouses. They eat and sleep in homes of two or three rooms. They cannot get out of each other's way. And the wealthy, leisured classes shun solitude as though it were a plague. The season is a rush of dinners, dances, theatres, all sorts of crowded functions. When town is left for

country, people jostle each other in country houses, at shoots, at hunts, at Monte Carlo. So low an idea have men of their own company, that every device is exhausted in the endeavour to get away from it.

Where then is solitude ? Despite all appearances we need not fear any real lack of it. Nature, so much wiser than ourselves, has taken care of that. She handles it as one of the chief instruments of our inner creation and has her own provisions for its constant supply. The outside world has still its vast reserves of silence, upon which we are continually happening. Once, the member of a merry party on an Alpine excursion, where the air was full of jests and persiflage, we stepped aside for a moment ; turned a corner. Our companions were hidden from view ; instead there stood before us the giants of the Oberland, illimitable wastes of ice and snow, the brooding heavens above, a vision of vastness and immensity. It seemed as if we had leaped from time into eternity ; nought left but the soul and the universe. Soon we were back again amongst our fellows, but the memory of that moment has never passed. How often is it thus with us ? You step out of the crowded saloon—civilisation's latest phase—on to the upper deck, and there is nothing but you, the lonely sea, and the lonelier sky. And nature presses us here not only with what she shows us, but with what she bids us imagine. There is a passage in Walter Pater which helps to what we mean. Speaking of Pascal, he bids us note " those great fine sayings which seem to betray by their depth of sound the vast, unseen, hollow places of nature, of humanity, just beneath one's feet or at one's side." Ah ! those " hollow places " ! Have

they not obsessed you at times ? In your dreams perhaps, or when you have lain wakeful at midnight ? Imagine what it must be at the centre of the earth ; or in the vast caverns, thousand of feet beneath the surface, where through all the ages there has been nothing but one awful silence, one impenetrable darkness !

But Pater, in his magnificently suggestive passage, bids us remember not only the hollow places of the world, but those also of humanity. We, too, like the round earth, are built with an outer surface, but with an inner realm of vasty caverns and with an impenetrable centre. We live in groups, in societies ; but these, after all, touch only upon our upper levels. Rarely do they reach the realm where *we* dwell. We live in crowded cities, but you can be lonelier in Fleet Street than in the centre of Sahara.

Nature, working upon all sides of us with this her potent instrument, introduces us, at different stages of our career, to successve phases and varieties of loneliness. With many of us she begins early. Is there an acuter experience than that of the boy, away from the home he has never before left, in his first night at school ? To many a sensitive soul it has been the first night in hell. He will have many more nights there—to find what an excellent place hell is as a school of culture. Later on, he will meet his other lonelinesses. The higher his nature the more acute they will be. Think of the solitude of the man of genius ; of the leader, the teacher in advance of his age ! His followers have got a living personality in front of them ; the sight of him warms their hearts, stirs their enthusiasm. But what has *he* in front of him—Luther on his way to Worms,

Jesus treading the road to Jerusalem? No visible leader for them; nothing for them but the invisible! Who is there to comprehend them, who to share their inmost thought? Their cry is that of Confucius of old: "Alas! there is no one that knows me, . . . but there is Heaven—that knows me." Solitude is the lot of all the teachers, of all the originals. Says Newman in one of his letters: "God intends me to be lonely. He has so framed my mind that I am in a great measure beyond the sympathies of other people, and thrown upon Himself." There he speaks for all who have trodden the higher pathways.

As a final experience, nature introduces us to the solitude of old age. It comes upon us gradually. The children grow up, marry, or pass out in that tide of movement which carries the Anglo-Saxon race to the ends of the earth. And death enters, carrying away, perhaps, our dearest and best loved. The rooms which echoed once to merry voices fall silent. The very furniture seems bereaved. The fireside chair, associated for years with some loved occupant, stands empty now, as though itself were dead. Is nature cruel here, heartless? She were assuredly, if this were all. But her solitudes seem all too calculated, too instinct with purpose, too clearly directed to an inner spiritual education to permit of such a conclusion. We fall back here on Kant's thought: "The inscrutable Wisdom through which we exist is not less venerable in what it denies us" (we may add in what it withdraws from us) "than in what it allows us." God's design is not over with us when our loved ones pass. There is a sequel.

"God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone."

Left alone! In one sense yet, but in a thousand other senses no. It is not there, be sure, to wither, to waste itself on the inane. It will find noblest objects on which to exercise itself, objects enduring, immutable.

For solitude, in all the aspects we have noticed, even in those which seem most forbidding, is, we say again, a gift, one of the soul's best possessions—provided we know how to use it. There nature, which offers the gift, demands our steadfast co-operation. For we can make of it what we choose, the finest or the ignoblest thing. All the highest human work comes out of solitude. The masses toil in gangs making bridges, constructing railroads, turning the rude ore into iron and steel; but the idea of the bridge, of the railway, of steel production, came first to some lonely thinker, to a committee of one. Our inward development may be measured by our practice of solitude. As we become proficient we can play with it, make a solitude in the midst of society, or fill our empty room with a chosen company. Sir William Hamilton, the mathematician, struck on the theory of quaternions as he was driving through the streets of Dublin. His wife was by his side in the carriage, but, be sure, she was far enough away from him at that moment! It is said of Guthrie that in his vacations in the Highlands he would sit in the drawing-room, surrounded by the laughing bevy of his young people, and, without any check on their gaiety, compose the sermons which were to

electrify his city audiences. The disciplined mind can build its own secret cell anywhere, and at a moment's notice. On the other hand, with no one near, we find ourselves in the best society. Is it not then that we taste often the sweetest joys of friendship? It is in our friends' bodily absence that we enter most deeply into our spiritual relationship. It is then, as we think of them, that we draw into ourselves the essence of their personality; realise all they are to us; appreciate with a new appetite the flavour of their affection, of their goodness to to us.

Our solitude is never a complete one. Can a man be called lonely with a good book before him? In literature we are free of the selectest circles. Who of us has not entered into the rapture of that much-abused man, Machiavelli, when, in the period of his exile, he speaks of his evening hours, where, with the great literatures open on his table—

> "I am fed with the food that alone is mine; . and these men in their humanity reply to me, and for the space of four hours I feel no weariness, remember no trouble, no longer fear poverty, no longer dread death; my whole being is absorbed in them."

Erasmus is with him there. With his book before him he says:

> "I give myself up to the society of my friends, with whom I enjoy the most delightful intercourse. I turn aside with them into some quiet nook, far from the madding crowd, and either whisper gently into their ear or give heed to their sweet words, communing with them as with my very soul. Is not this the purest of joys?"

And as life advances and the solitudes thicken

upon us, we shall, if we have been learning the real lessons, find in them and in ourselves a wonderful adaptation. The old society has largely gone, but a new one has taken its place. In the spirit's hush fresh voices are heard. It is the time of quiet, and we have become in love with quiet. All the great spirits come to that. Gregory of Nazianzen, who in his brilliant, stormy career had been familiar with the cities and courts, came to it. Says he, "Therefore I have returned into myself, and deem quiet the only safety of the soul." Carlyle came to it. "The happiest of all men I think is he who can keep himself the quietest." Even Voltaire, that ultra turbulent, comes to it. "There comes a time when love of the repose and the charms of a retired life carry it over everything else."

But man was not made to be alone. We have wrung from solitude its deepest secret, struck the fountain of its unfailing joy when, and when only, penetrating its inmost recesses, our soul has heard there the voice of its great Companion. Romanes, who had tried the experiment, found that "the nature of man without God is thoroughly miserable." It is that we may know Him more perfectly, more intimately, that life shuts us off, in its onward movement, more and more from the human contacts. And in proportion as we know Him we find with Newman, to quote him once more, that "we are never less alone than when alone." Herein lay the overflowing joy of those early Christians which, as he studied it, struck Matthew Arnold so profoundly. They had discovered in Christ a Divine contact more vivid, more real than had ever been realised before. They had felt the truth of those wonderful words of

Jesus, not found in our Gospels, but happily handed down in tradition: "Wheresoever there is one alone, I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find Me. Cleave the wood and there am I."

XVI

OF STRANGE HAPPINESSES

We are all in search of happiness, of the best thing for ourselves. We may seek it in different ways, but the quest is universal. We decry hedonism, pleasure-hunting, but what we decry is the wrong sort of pleasure, or wrong ways of securing it. Saints and sinners are all one in this pursuit. Observe people who are walking along a muddy road. They will, every one of them—the saints as much as the sinners—avoid the miry places, and pick out the dry spots. Your wayfarer may be Plymouth Brother or an atheist. Each will walk here on the same rule; each will look for the best bit. Orthodoxy, the orthodoxy even of the ascetics and martyrs, has given its sanction to this cult in making heaven a place of happiness. It has never consecrated misery in the future, whatever it may have had to say of misery in the present. The world exists in the idea of being a well-off world; of striving for that if it has not attained it. And it has secured a vast deal of it; far more than the pessimist is apt to allow. Humanity's profit and loss account, as Renan observes, reveals everywhere its surplusage of happiness. Were it not so we should have long since ceased to exist.

That this is so, that enjoyment of life is so widely, so universally spread, is shown by one single fact.

We are all in love with what we are. Everyone believes in his own country, the place where all his experiences have been made ; where all his fortunes are bound up. The Englishman does not want to be anything but an Englishman, nor the American anything but an American. At the close of the Franco-German War a French publicist remarked—"*Il n'est plus agrêable d'être Français.*" But that was at a moment when his country was at the nadir of its fortunes, overwhelmed with disaster and disgrace. Nothing would induce the average Frenchman to-day to be anything other than French. And nobody wants to change his individual being ; each of us would be horrified at losing it. A man would, perhaps, like other circumstances for himself. The question is sometimes asked whether we should like to live our life over again. And the expected negative reply is held as a reason for pessimism. It is nothing of the kind. The question and the answer do not touch the matter. For the joy of living is not in going back, in mere repetition, but in going on. When I am travelling to Scotland I do not want to turn back at Leeds and repeat the journey from London. But that does not show that the journey from London to Leeds has not been pleasant. We are designed for well-being, and for enjoying our being. It is our nature ; and, as Tertullian says, "*Natura veneranda est, non erubescenda*" (Nature is to be venerated, not to be ashamed of).

What we have to remember here—and the remembrance should be destructive of hasty views, and, above all, of hastily formed social schemes—is that happiness is the strangest and the most subtle of compounds ; that it distils from what apparently

are the most opposed elements. It is a plant of the hardiest growth, springing out of every kind of soil, and nourished by every wind that blows. You may look for it where all the circumstances would seem to demand its appearance, and find it not; and again, in impossible conditions, and behold! it is flourishing. Where you do get it in a man, it derives often enough from the opposite direction from where you expect it. Louis XVI., in his happier years, gained his pleasure, not from his monarchy and his Versailles, but from his clock-making. The late Lord Salisbury enjoyed himself best not in being Prime Minister and a great noble, but in his work-room as a chemical researcher. All the pursuits, indeed even the most forbidding of them, yield their secret joy. The average man would sicken at the sight of an operation. The man who has made operations his work—the skilled surgeon—finds there his chief interest. Grave-diggers are cheerful people; and undertakers, when they are off duty. They are sombre while in it, but sombreness is a professional *rôle*, and, be sure, has its own satisfactions. All our moods, even the seeming darkest, yield obscure delights, else we should not cherish them so often. Did not old Burton feel what he said when he wrote: "All my joys to this are folly; nought so sweet as melancholy." Juvenel had this in mind in his "*Est quædam flere voluptas*" (There is a certain pleasure even in weeping).

We underrate our happiness because it is so rarely a pure state; it is so usually mixed with other things. A given moment of our total consciousness is like the strata of a geological formation. There are all kinds of sensations, superimposed on each other; or,

perhaps, to speak more accurately, chemically mixed. Was Scott happy or unhappy when he was writing "Ivanhoe"? We read he was suffering excruciating anguish when dictating it, and took great quantities of laudanum to alleviate the pain. Yet who doubts that with all that there was that highest of joys, the joy of creative activity? Was not his state that which Marie Bashkirtseff describes: "My body weeps and sighs, while my soul inwardly rejoices!" So often, as Browning puts it, our joy is "three parts pain." But the joy is there, not the less real and precious for that. Francis of Assisi and his companions led the hardest and barest of lives. Of physical comforts they had none. Yet what was it that led Francis to speak of their band as the "joculatores Domini" (the Lord's merry men)? A thousand instances show that it is not hardship in itself that drives away joy; nor the absence of it that produces it. The tragic event in the Antarctic that not many months ago pierced the world's heart, proves that. Here were men comfortable at home in England; with roofs over them, fires to warm them, their meals ready for them at stated hours. And yet, of their own free will, none compelling them, they leave it all; leave civilisation, leave the easy temperatures to face the utmost horrors of the uncharted wild; its hungers, its deadly cold. They found their happiness in that; or, rather, in what lay behind it; in great things aimed at and achieved; great things for knowledge, for their country, for their own souls. And amid all the terrors of their situation they carried that happiness to their death. So often is it that in our utterest extremities the rarest feelings leap to

birth; "a joy springs up amid distress, a fountain in the wilderness."

Amongst strange happinesses—strange because they are so little noted—may we not count those brought by the revolving year? Amongst these I put very high the joys of February. It is the month of unlimited hope; hope, and with so little to show for it. That is its charm. The flowers are not there, nor the sunshine, nor the waving harvests. But they are all in prospect. We are moving towards them. The worst is behind. Every day is longer than the last. Before us all the spring, all the summer, all the fulness of autumn. There are no disappointments in February. They may come later. The spring may be retarded; July may be a rainy month. The harvest may turn out a failure. But there is nothing of that yet. No cloud dims the radiancy of the prospect. Everything at present is within us; the soul's special treasure. And it is all good. So we claim February as specially the soul's month; the month which, above all others, represents our state in this world; the state of our spiritual pilgrimage; where, with almost everything at present below ground, with such scant apparent evidences in demonstration of our faith, we yet find ourselves full of faith; where the great harvests are all to come, where the heart's best is yet to be reaped.

One of our strange happinesses—and it is a happiness—is that of falling asleep. Life is good, but we find pleasure in quitting it at times. Wearied with the day we get into our bed in the deliberate search of the unconscious. In its hour it is a boon. And it was this thought which gave sanity to Cicero's view of death. It could not be feared by an upright

man, because, in a Divinely governed universe, there lay before us here only two possible alternatives: that of being unconscious, as in sleep, or of awaking to a higher existence. If even the latter were not for us, the former would be no hurt. There is no unhappiness in sleep; no, nor in its indefinite prolongation. It is Henry More's thought in his "Platonic Song of the Soul":

> "Yea, though the soul should mortal prove,
> So be God's life but in me move
> To my last breath—I'm satisfied;
> A lonesome mortal god to have died."

That, indeed, is not going far. Christianity goes gloriously further; and with good evidences for its claim. But it is worth while to remember that even that other alternative carries with it its own consolation. The best attitude of all here, to our thinking, is that of a simple trust in God; the belief that what is best for us, both as to our future and the manner of it, may be quietly and lovingly left to Him, whose goodness and wisdom we have already so amply proved.

We can be so sure of His dealings with us in the future because of His dealings with us here and now. And especially in those sterner experiences to which we have already referred. A full half of our happinesses are derived from them; yes, and are enjoyed in them. The gloom of last night helped assuredly to prepare this new spirit in the morning.

> "Wo sind die Sorge nun und Noth
> Die mich noch gestern wollt erschaffen?
> Ich schâm mich dess im Morgen-roth."

(Where now the cares and fateful things which

yester eve created for me? I blush for them in morning's light.)

We slept on our trouble, and the morning has put it in a new aspect. It has given us a plan of deliverance, and we are armed again with hope and the joy of action. The most tremendous fates have an odd way of transforming themselves when they come finally face to face. Being hanged is not usually regarded as a pleasant experience. Yet when David Gargill, the Covenanting martyr, was brought for execution to the Grassmarket his word was: "The Lord knows I go up this ladder with less fear, confusion, or perturbation of mind that ever I entered a pulpit to preach." The story of the early martyrs is to the same effect. What led them to choose torture and death, if it were not the sense of a higher good and blessedness within them that was worth it all? It is history, not fiction, that Minucius Felix, the first Latin writer for Christianity, is giving us when he says:

"How beautiful is the spectacle to God when a Christian does battle with pain! . . . God's soldier is neither forsaken in suffering nor brought to an end by death. Boys and young women among us treat with contempt crosses and tortures, wild beasts and all the bugbears of punishment, with the inspired patience of suffering."

The question here, remember, is not as to the rightness or wrongness of their special ideas. You may dispute on that. What is not to be argued away is the fact that in innumerable instances human nature has confronted pessimism by finding in life's most terrible outward experiences a something within that has joyously triumphed over them all.

There are, alas! happinesses that have become

strange to us because, once in our midst, they have now ceased and disappeared. It is high time to ask, Why? Where is the old joy of the countryside? In bygone days rural England resounded with honest merrymaking. Our literature is full of it. It rings out in Chaucer, and the Elizabethans, and Drayton, and later still. Here is a note from the later seventeenth century, too rollicking perhaps, but typical:

> "Come, lasses and lads, take leave of your dads,
> And away to the maypole hie;
> For every he has got him a she,
> With a minstrel standing by!"

Where is the maypole now; where the harvest homes, and the sports, the jubilations, that rang through merrie England? They resound, we say, in our literature, but we of to-day do not hear them. The merry-makers are gone; gone the English yeoman, gone the stalwart labourer, with his well-furnished home, his freehold acres, his rights of pasture. Gone where? To the town slum, to lands beyond the seas; driven away by unholy land laws, by the theft of his property, of his rights. Our rural population, especially its working population, is diminishing at a rate which, if unchecked, will soon leave us without a population at all. England is becoming like a city, which grows nothing; which feeds itself entirely on imports. And this, while with a proper land system, with a proper agriculture, we could grow enough in England to feed us all! It is our first national business to restore the old note; indeed to improve upon it. We are in need of, and must have, a revolution as complete as that of France; a revolution which, like the French one, destroys our feudal system root and branch,

and plants again upon our deserted acres a community of free, happy workers, secure in their holdings, strong with the strength of fresh air, and furnished with all that science and co-operation can do, to turn their labour into a sure prosperity.

We have to attack these problems ; to labour—and this is one of our highest gladnesses—till no joy that is possible to man shall remain strange to the masses of our fellows. But let us not, in the midst of our strivings, take too gloomy a view. While we work for this, let us remember that God is working too, and far more successfully than ourselves, towards the same end. His happinesses are every day being scattered broadcast. They come to us from a thousand subtle sources, and in most unexpected ways. There is a joy in standing up and in lying down ; in resting and in working ; in eating and sleeping ; in speech and in silence ; in society and in solitude ; even in being ill and in dying. Who shall measure the joys of a true piety, the soul's sacred rapture, when it transcends all bodily conditions and reaches the heights of Divine communion ? Let us not be afraid of life, even in its weirdest, most desperate conditions. For each of these has hidden in its darkest recesses its secret spring of gladness, its well of living water.

XVII

NEW NOTES IN RELIGION

THE title may seem to some inappropriate, if not altogether unseemly. It suggests that religion has its modes, its fashions, as though it were an affair of a bonnet shop. Is not religion the one permanent thing, amid a world of change? Is not its subject-matter the timeless, the eternal? Is it not that to which the weary spirit, tired with the fluctuations of fortune, with hopes destroyed, and illusions vanished, turns as to the solid rock amid the tossing waves, as that which, being spiritual and everlasting, is beyond all the decays of earth? Is not the faith, once delivered to the saints, a full and final deliverance? All this, in its main lines, and viewed from a certain standpoint, may be freely accepted; and yet our subject remains as being at once real and entirely pertinent. For what we are here to deal with are not essences and finalities, but human preceptions of religion, human experiences and expressions. The eternal realities are there sure enough, and glorious in their changelessness. But man himself is perpetually changing. He is on evolution's path, urged ever onward to new experiences, and, through them, ever developing new powers. The universe, without changing, becomes a new universe to us, as our perceptions of it widen. The stars are as of old, but man revises

his astronomy. There is no more in it than ten thousand years ago, but we see more, and our keener sight secures us a new map of its contents.

And this has been the history of religion—of religion as we know it in Christianity. From its beginning there have always been new notes in it. Looked at from the standpoint of human knowledge and feeling, it was one thing to the disciples who sat at the feet of Jesus, and another to the societies which gathered in His name after His death. And in every age since men have been seeing fresh things in it—seeing with the special brand of eyesight which they brought to it—an eyesight coloured by their temperament, their race, their general knowledge of the world. So, in their following generations, men saw it with Gnostic eyes, with Greek eyes, and Latin eyes, with eremite and monkish eyes, with Protestant eyes, and now to-day with scientific eyes. The facts themselves are there, and can never be changed. What has changed, and changed enormously, is our knowledge of other facts and the relation of these to the subject matter itself. Religion, in its broadest sense, may be defined as the aspect of the soul to the Whole in which it finds itself. And for Christianity the crucial point is that this whole is no longer the whole which presented itself to the first disciples and to the apostolic age. It is so much vaster. To St. Paul and his contemporaries the universe consisted of the earth, with a Tartarus below it, and a series of heavens above it, one placed above the other. You could descend into the one and ascend into the other. That belief still survives in some ecclesiastical circles. Tyrrell tells of a certain Jesuit Father who informed his audience that " according to science some of the

stars were nearly as big as the world, and were hundreds of miles away!" The new astronomy burst in upon this pious concert with a note which jarred terribly upon its harmony. So disturbing was it that we have the excellent and broad-minded Melanchthon protesting that the views of Copernicus were quite unwarranted by the facts, and opposed to all religion. Well, the new views have prevailed, and we have to make what we can of the fact that stars are something more than to be night-lights for earth; that the said earth, instead of being the centre, is the minor planet of a minor sun, a speck of dust in the surrounding immensity. And, moreover, that saints who "ascended" from England and saints who "ascended" from Australia would be going in exactly opposite directions! It was so, of course, in the time of St. Paul, but that we know it and he did not makes some difference to the religious outlook. Not so much difference, though, as some might think. The difference finally is that religion for us has become more spiritual, and less dependent on physical considerations. We may sum it up, indeed, in the great saying of Augustine: "*Foris te quaerebam, et intus eras*" (I was seeking Thee without, and behold, Thou wast within).

Not less remarkable is the change that has come in another dominant note in religion and theology, on the question of sin. To put it more definitely, we may speak here of the dropping of a later note, and the re-emergence of an earlier and more authoritative one. Our Protestant creeds and confessions, resting on a Pauline interpretation, have declared sin to be a hopeless inheritance of the human race, derived from Adam's fall—from a transaction in

Eden. Milton, from whom as youngsters we derived so much of our theology, puts it for us in the majestic lines in which he begins his great epic :

> " Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe."

We know what Augustine and his successors have made of that transaction, what a lugubrious outlook for the majority of us they have constructed. But since then we have been re-reading our Bible. We have discovered that not only are these Genesis chapters never referred to throughout the rest of the Old Testament, but that they have absolutely no place in the teaching of Christ. So far from regarding the mass of men as hopelessly corrupted, foredoomed to perdition, He companies familiarly with the reputedly worst of them ; is a " friend of publicans and sinners." To one of the most utterly reprobate, according to the standards of orthodoxy, He utters the great word : " Hath no man condemned thee ? Neither do I condemn thee ; go and sin no more." To these disfranchised of heaven and of men He is the protector and vindicator, fighting for their rights, offering them words of hope and cheer. His note on this theme throughout is the one which modern science is vindicating ; that sin is no hopeless business, but a phase in the moral movement. In that movement man has become a sinner by ceasing to be an animal, which is incapable of sin. He has come from brutehood to moralhood, and his transgressions, lamentable as they seem, are his stumblings and slippings into the mud in the endeavour to gain foothold in this new sphere. That a Gospel so Divine

as that of Jesus could be addressed to such beings is the highest of compliments to them. To address it to the hopelessly depraved, to a *massa perditionis*, would have been as absurd as to address it to salamanders. That the publicans and sinners received it with joy was evidence that their deepest nature was in affinity with it.

To this new note, of the root of goodness in humanity, of its essential salvability, has of late been added another. It is that of the essential and universal sharing among us of whatever guilt there is. Society in these later days has developed a new conscience about itself. Of old the prisoner was just the prisoner—with whom we knew perfectly well what to do. We had a perfected apparatus for dealing with him—the policeman, the magistrate, the judge and, in extreme cases, the scaffold and the hangman. When the criminal's job was thus neatly finished off, we turned—with the satisfaction of having done something—to the next man. But to-day our easy consciousness in these matters has been disturbed by an obtruding thought—the thought of our collective responsibility for the criminal and his crime. The question has arisen for us, and we can no longer evade it, whether after all the criminal does begin and end with himself; whether, rather, he does not begin and end with *us;* whether we are not a *particeps criminis;* whether he is not *our* product, the product of the society to which we belong; the product of our criminal doings and neglectings. We trace back his sordid story to find ourselves besmirched. We go back to the hovel which reared him, the hovel which capital prepared for him, and out of which it got its profits; to land

laws which drove his forbears from the wholesome country to this city den ; to the moral neglects which shut him off from religion, from education, from every wholesome influence ; to the Cain-like instinct which led us to pursue our own fortunes, careless utterly of the well-being of our neighbour. And so our confession of sin is changing its note. We confess not Adam's sin, but our own. And we are showing some signs of repentance, which is the most hopeful thing that can be said of us. When we press for great measures of social reform, for measures of land reform, of housing, of education, and disgorge of our wealth to pay for them, for heaven's sake let us not grumble at the cost ! It is blood-money ; to expiate wrongs and crimes of the well-to-do against the dispossessed, wrongs which cry to heaven, and for which an account has to be rendered.

Amongst the new notes that are arising in religion we are not unaware that there are some false ones. Amongst them is one based on a bad psychology. Some excellent people, Christian Scientists and others, are just now preaching a doctrine of universal, immediate, and perfect physical health, as one of the gifts of Christ's religion. Their thesis is a simple one. It is that of a holy, ever-present Spirit who designs our present deliverance, not only from sin, but from our bodily diseases and disablements. We have only to open our minds and offer our wills, in a self-surrendering faith to that Spirit's power, and the thing is done. And they point to experiences of their own, and of others to whom they have preached this gospel, as evidence in proof. It is very simple ; if things only *were* simple ! But, alas ! they are not. In this analysis a trifling element is

omitted which makes all the difference. It is that of the varying scale of organisms which, on this hypothesis, are to be submitted to the Spirit's work. The briefest glance at the world as it is, and at history as it has been, shows us that our faculty of reception—of the Spirit or of any other power—depends not only on the outside influence, but quite as much on the quality and character of the receptive organs. Let a suggestion—rather brutal in itself, perhaps—suffice. What would be the influence—whether for holiness or for healing—of the highest spiritual force on, let us say, a stone or on a crocodile ? There is everything, we say, of grace and power without, but would their utmost efficacy avail to create anything answering to it on our stone ; or on our crocodile, supposing he were sick ? In the world we find ourselves in, the Spirit works, and, so far as we see, can only work, according to the receptive quality of the things it operates on. It never overrides, or reverses, or treats as though they were not, things as they are. It never sanctifies stone or converts crocodiles. And it respects the facts of the human organism just as it respects the facts of stones or animals. It never overrides the facts of human decay or human dissolution. It never forgets that *ætat.* seventy is something other than *ætat.* twenty. If universal health and vigour were within its range men would never see the infirmities of age, and they would never die. But they do grow old, they do die ; and in the meantime they feel all the differences between being strong or weak, between being well or ill. The experiences these teachers speak of are real enough ; but they are real to their own organisms, to their own receptive capacity. They represent the power

of some minds over some bodies, represent occult processes of the subconscious mind; represent unexplored possibilities of both body and soul, possibilities which science is examining, and about which it has yet much more to say. Assuredly we are in contact with the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Holiness, but its power in us is ever according to the receptive development we have already reached, and goes never beyond it. There are doubtless higher developments coming; man is on the upward way both physically and spiritually. But to teach as though there were no differences here, and no limitations consequent upon them, is to delude ourselves and very cruelly to delude others.

But we prefer here—for this is our main subject—to deal with new notes in religion that are true ones. We come back then to one of these which, though not often noticed, has yet, to our thinking, a special value for our whole religious outlook. We refer to the sense of humour as having a legitimate place in religion. It has had a place there before, but not a legitimate one. There has been from the oldest times a humorous treatment of sacred things, but it has come—at least, in public—almost entirely from the scoffers and the rebels. We think here of second-century Lucian in his "Dialogues of the Dead," in his ridicule of the early Christians; of the *rire énorme* of Rabelais. We remember the obscene jests carved into stone by some of the mediæval cathedral builders. We think of the feasts of unreason in the tenth century, when, in Paris, priests offered incense of burnt leather, sang obscene songs, and ate on the altar; when, at Evreux, priests wore their surplices inside out and threw bran in each other's

eyes; and at other churches a bishop and archbishop of fools were elected, and so on. But the Church as such, theology as such, has never admitted humour as conditioning either its thoughts or acts. It has regarded the universe as something absolutely and only solemn, awful, too often terrible. It has never projected a laugh into the future state. The idea of there being a possible laugh in God were a blasphemy. To-day we are asking whether that, after all, can be a true view of things? For we find that laughter and the sense of humour are of all things human the most truly human. Humour is one of the saving clauses which makes things tolerable when otherwise they would often be so intolerable. And does not nature laugh? Laugh when her flowers break out in the spring, when her lambs frolic in the fields, when her monkeys play their tricks, when her parrots talk to us? And is it a false view which carries all this further; which makes it possible to believe that humanity holds here with Divinity; that there are great laughs waiting for us at the other side; laughs, perhaps, directed specially to the gloomy notion we have held concerning some things over there? When we have once acclimatised in our souls the notion that when the children laugh the Parent laughs too; that things are carried on, in heaven and on earth, in a spirit of good humour, we shall have dismissed some bogies, and our religion will be a healthier and a happier thing.

Perhaps the newest note of all in our religion to-day is really its oldest note—new to us because it has been so long lost amid the age-long clamours of theological controversy. It is that the kingdom of God is not far away in distant heavens, but amongst

us and in us—there ready to be wrought out from its germ to its fulness. Is not Rauschenbusch right when he affirms that " with all our faults we modern men in many ways are more on a level with the real mind of Jesus than any generation that has gone before " ? That earliest Gospel was a Gospel of the Kingdom, and the Kingdom meant the reign of righteousness ; of peace on earth and good-will amongst men. In the Epistle of Barnabas, in the beginning of the second century, we read : " There are three dogmas of the Lord—the hope of life . . . and righteousness, and love." A singular difference surely here between these dogmas and those others —Athanasian and the rest—that succeeded ! The business of religion is to set earth right ; heaven can take care of itself. The new note is that Christianity is essentially a human affair, a revolutionary human affair ; the putting everywhere of the right things in their place and of the wrong things in theirs How revolutionary it is was recognised by King Robert of Sicily, when, listening to the words, " He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree," he remarked, " It was well it was sung only in Latin ! " As man, Divinely led, Divinely inspired, progresses, he will find ever new notes coming to him from the heavens, new notes breaking out of his own evergrowing soul. The concert is not finished yet.

XVIII

OF THINGS SIMPLE

The extravagance of modern civilisation has begotten a reaction, and created a cult in favour of what is known as simplicity. It is a cult that is always interesting and sometimes amusing. A French pastor writes a book on "The Simple Life," which has an enormous circulation, largely among the rich. Wealthy society ladies read it in their silken boudoirs, and grow ecstatic over its contents. A popular novelist creates the character of "John Senhouse," a man of culture, who turns his back on his inherited wealth and spends his life on moors and by hedgerows, earning his living by odd jobs, exulting in nature and the open air. "Old Traherne" is read with a new eagerness, Traherne who, clad in homespun and with £10 a year, led, as he says, the life of a king in a glorious world. We study Whitman with an added zest when we think of him, in the age of American millionairedom, as living in his boat-house, and, in the freedom of his poverty, defying convention and saying out his whole soul. The cult, we say, is amusing; both in the lip service paid to it by some, and, not less so, in the queer way in which its enthusiasts are seeking to carry it out. But, fads apart, it is a good cult. The world is full of experiments in the art of living, and the further it goes with them the more manifest becomes the

sanity of the simpler way as against the way of extravagance and ostentation. Luxury is convicting itself by its own boredom. The successful man who began in a cottage builds himself a palace, to find it a weariness.

What good after all is hugeness? It is well enough in its place. We are glad to be in a huge universe, with so interesting a part in it. We like hugeness in the sea, in Mont Blanc, in Niagara. But is it in place in a home? Is there any pleasure in traversing state apartments, in an entrance hall that suggests public meetings, in drawing-rooms too vast to be cosy? When a man comes home from his work, what does he want but his den, with a warm fire and his armchair, his friend, and mayhap his pipe? The old Greeks knew a thing or two in this direction. They reserved their splendour for their public buildings, where it is appropriate. They lived their private life in small houses. A palace is a palace by being inhuman. Its vastness is anti-social. When the world has revised its scale of values, when it has reached, after its long search, a common-sense estimate of what in life is really worth having, it will proclaim war against everything, indoors or out of doors, that destroys or diminishes the warm human contacts, everything that removes us from nature and from each other—everything which starves those natural emotions and affections and inward satisfactions for which simplicity is the one true habitat.

On this side of things we are all for the simple. But there is another region where things are different; the region, namely, of thought, of certain great problems. Here, it is true, up to a certain point,

simplicity is the rule ; indeed, is our guiding star. Nature, as Newton points out in his " Principia," for the discovery of her secrets, urges upon us her law of the simple. We are not to bring in extraneous causes where simpler ones will suffice. And all her beginnings are simple. All the material of the physical universe, as science now avers, comes back to one substance, the impalpable, all-surrounding ether. The world's literatures, in their immense variety, are products of the letters of the alphabet. Music, in its every form, is a combination of the few notes of the scale. The whole of Euclid, of the differential calculus, of the binomial theorem ; every abstrusest problem of pure and applied mathematics derives back to certain elementary ideas of number and space. Biology, over its vast range, shows us the evolution of animal form, from a few rudimentary types. Everything, as the Stoics used to say, tends to oneness, to unity.

So far, all is plain sailing. But we have gone only a short distance into the problems of life before we find ourselves pulled up short. We discover that nature is not quite so simple as she at first appears ; and that men in their haste to interpret her have rushed into some false simplicities which are not hers and at which she silently laughs. She has a sly way of putting us off, as parents put off their inquisitive children, with answers suitable to infancy, but which are not solvents of the question. She lets men believe the world is the centre of the universe, and that the sun goes round the earth ; that there are four elements, and so on, until they are in a condition to know more. It is as when the small people are told that their way of coming into the

world was that the doctor brought them, which is enough for them to be going on with. It is only when, in applying the easy method of the great problems, men become dogmatic and arrogant in their simplicities; when they assert that their method explains all and answers everything, that they get wrong; and that this wrongness leads to mischievous confusions. There are a great many of these confusions just now current in the world, which we shall do well to take note of.

There is, to begin with, the whole problem of the universe and of life. Max Müller, in his "Silesian Horse-herd," publishes an interesting correspondence between himself and this German peasant. The herdsman had reached a quite easy solution of the whole affair. It is so simple. He says:

"Mind is a development, an evolving phenomenon. One would suppose it impossible that a thinking man, who has ever observed a child, could be of any other opinion. Why seek ghosts behind matter? Mind is a function of living organisms, which belongs also to a goose and a chicken."

This is the kind of thinking with which Haeckel in his "Riddle of the Universe," and Büchner in his "Matter and Force," have made us familiar. It goes back to—in fact, reproduces—the argument of old Democritus that the world is the product of the attraction of atoms. But, alas! the explanation is too simple. It does not cover all we know. When we are told "there is no thought without phosphorus," that, in fact, mind is always and everywhere a product of matter, the statement rests on the supposition that because two things—here matter and mind—appear in conjunction, they are therefore necessarily identical, a supposition certainly very simple, but at

the same time very absurd. If mind were identical with matter it would show all the properties of matter, whereas it shows none of them. It is neither visible, weighable, nor dissectable. We cannot think of it as produced by matter, *except by first putting mind into the matter.* We cannot regard the atom as creating the universe and ourselves except by regarding our atom as a vastly clever fellow; and cleverness is always a mental quality. Martineau, in a noble argument, shows that when materialists charge the theist with anthropomorphism, the charge recoils upon themselves. For, to make matter and force the origin of all things, they, just as does the theist, begin from themselves. For their notions of matter and force are derived from their own activities. The difference between them and the theist lies simply here: that whereas the theist, beginning with his own consciousness, finds there an intelligence and a will, and argues from these to an intelligence and a will beyond him, the materialist does the same thing with the matter and force of which his own consciousness is the primary witness. Where they differ is that in the spiritual interpretation we argue from the nobler part of ourselves, while the materialist starts from the baser. It is a matter of choice. For ourselves, we prefer the higher to the lower.

There is a similar too easy simplicity in some current theories of social life. All the evils and confusion of the world, we are told, come from a bad economic distribution. Let us re-arrange the world under a system in which everybody has an equal share of its goods; in which everybody is equally well fed, clothed and housed; in which

manual labour has the same rewards as the intellectual, and we shall reach a paradise in which we shall have no need of any other. In this view, the view of Marx and Lassalle, religion will disappear, and be a good riddance. It has been ever the great supporter of inequality ; a fiction of the possessors to keep the poor in their place ; the clever invention of a good world beyond to keep the under dog content with his lot, in the hope of something better by and by.

When we think of this simple solution we are always reminded of Fourier and his great experiment. The French Socialist waited for years to find a capitalist who should assist him in founding his famous phalanstery. The phalanstery was to be the model of the new social world. It was to be an institution in which all ranks were merged ; in whose buildings, lands and fellowship men were to live, work and enjoy on a footing of entire equality. Where there was a difference it lay in the fact that the more repulsive labours should be regarded and treated as the more honourable. Men were to go to their handicrafts to the sound of music. Those who looked after drains, who emptied cesspools, who did the dirtiest work, were to have special rewards. When the phalanstery was once set going, its method would spread like lightning. In the briefest space the world would be a collection of phalansteries, and the millennium an accomplished fact. Well, Fourier actually met his capitalist, and carried out his experiment. Alas ! he found his problem was not so simple as he had imagined. Human nature was not simple, but horribly complex ! His phalanstery broke up in hideous confusion, and the world, now nigh a hundred years later, goes on

in its old way. We are still making experiments in our social conditions, and shall go on making them. But any one who supposes that when we have eliminated all the economic wrongs ; when the world from top to bottom has all its physical hungers satisfied ; has all the easement, all the leisure it wants, it will in these things have found its happiness, is surely, of all things simple, the simplest. Man is too complex for these solutions. The end of his material requirements is only the beginning of his spiritual ones. There, deepest in him, lies a hunger which no material world, or collection of worlds, can ever satisfy. When the animal pressures cease, the higher ones begin ; the pressures of time and eternity ; of life and death ; of sorrows, bereavements, sins ; of impossible longings which nothing visible can meet ; the insistent question of why he is here and for what ? At a certain conference the present writer put this view of the matter before some Socialist leaders. Their answer was : " When we have got our rights we shall, perhaps, think of these things." They and their followers assuredly will. Their own nature will take care of that. Whatever triumphs Socialism may secure, the most certain of them is the re-emergence of religion as the one prime necessity of the soul.

But here again, on this question of religion, we are met with the same story of an array of false simplicities. The ecclesiastical authorities everywhere have so far been driving at the suppression of facts in the interest of things simple. Rome, for instance, has offered the world a solution of spiritual difficulties in the proclamation of an infallible Church. We have only to believe everything the Church affirms

and the affair is settled for us. Unfortunately, this infallible Church has again and again shown itself the most fallible of authorities, and has been the slowest to renounce its errors. It was only in the last century that it found grace to admit that its denunciation of Galileo's " heresy " about the earth going round the sun, was a mistake. We never to-day look to the Church to discover truth. It is the uncircumcised scientists who do that for us. Rome's condemnation of private judgment, in the interests of its infallibilty, is one of the funniest of notions. It is confronted with the fact that there never was, or is, inside the Church or out of it, anything else but private judgment ! Private judgment, and nothing else, is the origin of all the Church creeds and Church decrees ; the private judgment, in the first place, of some masterful mind, imposing itself upon synods, upon councils, upon the papal chair, and so coming out finally as a universal judgment. Anyone who has studied the history of Church dogmas can certify to that. We know now there is no infallibility in this world. The only approach to it is in the growing human consciousness, ever learning, ever casting out its errors as it discovers them ; the common human consciousness we say, the organ in us of that Universal Reason which seeks through us, ever more clearly to express itself. Of the Roman certitude we may take Father Tyrrell's affirmation, who, after his long and intimate experience of it, wound up finally with the judgment that " mendacity seems to have eaten into the heart of the whole system."

But if Romanism has erred thus egregiously in its endeavour for simplicity, Protestantism has

fallen into similar mistakes. In the struggle of the sixteenth century it, too, sought for its simple formula. As against the doctrine of an infallible Church, it set up the doctrine of an infallible Bible. It was not Luther who did that, but his successors. The Reformer himself had no delusions on that subject. It was later and lesser men who pursued this fatal track, until they proclaimed every sentence, every letter, in fact, every Hebrew vowel-point as infallibly inspired. Religion has since had a long and weary way to go in getting clear of that *impasse*. It was a claim which the Bible itself never made, and the falsity of which reveals itself sufficiently in its own frank pages. We know the Book now as inspired, indeed, but not in that way. It is a revelation of God by being, in the first place, so deep and searching a revelation of man. It is the story of man's quest for God and of God's answer to the quest ; of God revealing Himself in human souls ; revealing Himself in different ages, and on different levels ; the light shining ever more clearly upon the human vision as it was able to receive it ; until, in that wondrous life and death which the New Testament enshrines, we find the Divinest sign which the heavens and the earth have yet disclosed to us, the sign in which we read the inmost heart of Deity.

No. Things are not simple. Life is not simple. Man is not simple. We walk in mysteries. What we have as a guide is not certainty, but faith. Shall we grumble that faith, as against all that opposes it, gives us no stronger evidence to go upon ? Surely its own work in us is its own best evidence ! The power that moves us ever towards love, and service, and a larger life, is surely a good power, that we can

least afford to part with. And it belongs, be sure, to a larger reality than that of our individual consciousness. What that Reality is could hardly be better put than in a memorable sentence of Tyrrell, to quote him once more :

> "From the continual and endless varieties of belief and devotion which originate in one way or another, the Spirit of Holiness evidently selects and assimilates the good and the useful, and throws away the worthless and the mischievous by the slow logic of spiritual life and experience."

We are under and in that Spirit, which is working out its process. It is not a simple process. But it is sure, and its end will not be frustrated.

XIX

OF HOLY PLACES

Sir Frederick Treves's impressive book on Palestine—which he calls "The Land that is Desolate"—offers us a vivid picture, not only of the country itself, but—and this almost unconsciously—of that other, vaster country, the realm of the soul. We see here in their most striking contrast the real and the ideal; bare nature and the throbbing human heart. The immediate effect of Palestine upon our author, as upon most travellers, is that of a vast disillusionment. You carry with you your oldest, deepest feelings; your most intimate, sacred affections; and what you meet with is almost everywhere that which shocks them. The Via Dolorosa is a lane of lies. That actual "path of pain" lies deep beneath the surface, buried for ever from human eyes. What is shown the stranger; what the poor Russian pilgrims who kneel in the mud and kiss the stones look upon is a mock road, laid out to deceive and to make money by. The "place called Calvary," with its tawdry fittings, gave Sir Frederick the idea of a lamp shop. The Church of the Nativity, with its quarrelling sects kept in order by a Turkish soldier, is an outrage on piety. Of Bethlehem itself the prevailing impression is of an indescribable dirtiness. And that is Palestine. But is that all of Palestine? The mere question shows us how far

ahead man is of the bare outside fact ; of the impressions of the hour ; how much more he is than the things he sees ; how much more than to-day is yesterday. Were Palestine ten times dirtier than it is ; were its inhabitants ten times greedier or meaner, it remains the Holy Land. And this not simply because of its consecrated memories ; not simply that its history goes back to immemorial times ; that innumerable pilgrim feet have traversed its stony ways ; that the noblest spirits have dwelt there ; that it has been the scene of deeds of highest emprise, of loftiest chivalries. All these belong to it ; are its inalienable possession. But they are not the deepest thing. We should not call this or any place holy but for the fact that the *soul of man* is holy. And Palestine is the sacred land because in it holiness reached its highest, its eternal expression. We are never satisfied with Jerusalem as an existing city. We never can be, and that because the heart carries in itself a Jerusalem of its own, one that is from above. It is good to be disillusioned with Palestine ; for there more than anywhere else it is borne in upon us that the visible is not our rest ; that, at its best, it sets up in us a more insistent sense of inadequacy ; that it reveals to us an innermost, an outermost, beyond all that we can see.

It is interesting to note how the idea of " holiness," as attached to places, first came into the human consciousness. Its beginnings were of the humblest sort. All that we possess in this kind started low down. Robertson Smith, in his " Religion of the Semites," gives an informing account of these origins. " While it is difficult," he says, " to fix the exact idea of holiness in ancient Semitic religion, it is quite

certain it has nothing to do with morality or purity of life." Perhaps the most prevailing sentiment in regard to it was that of fear. There was a universal belief in the djinn or spirit, usually malevolent, who had his dwelling in lonely, darksome places—a wood, a cave, or deep ravine. Such places were set apart, approached with awe, and with offerings. The space around them was a haunted realm. It was a holy "ground" not to be lightly approached. He thinks "the original seat of a conception like that of the burning bush, which must have its physical basis in electrical phenomena, must probably be sought in the clear, dry air of the desert, or of lofty mountains." We have travelled a far way from all that. Through long ages past, and not less in our own time, holy places have become such from their connection, not with djinns or demons, but with lofty human souls whose spirit and whose deeds have made the things they handled, and the very earth they trod upon, for ever sacred to us. Matter is nothing till it has been touched with spirit. When the soul breathes upon it, it becomes transfigured and glorified.

It is soul always that makes our earth holy. We remember that grand saying of Thucydides that "the whole earth is the tomb of great men." Their presence in it, even their dead presence, consecrates it. We have sympathy with that thought of the ancients, which the German Fechner, in our day, has refurnished with so brilliant a play of scientific imagination, that the round world itself is possessed of a soul that everywhere pervades it, and which expresses itself in all the infinite forms of earth life. Our personal appreciation of nature is always a spiritual act. We put in so much of what we take.

The " yellow primrose " is but the " yellow primrose " to the vulgar. The " flower in the crannied wall " opens its meaning only to the poet soul. Many of us have remembrances of elect moments associated with certain spots ; it may be the sudden glimpse of a sequestered valley, or a majestic scene of the Alps, or a view even that, at other times, has seemed commonplace, when the soul was seized with a sudden rapture and carried beyond itself. The spirit of romance has seized us. We hear " the horns of elfland faintly blowing." Or it is a deeper emotion. The air has become instinct with unseen presences ; we are pressed with the sense of something infinitely august; our rapture becomes adoration. And that place becomes for us ever after holy ground. And, indeed, the world's beauty, in its appeal to us, is essentially a spiritual thing. How did the sense of beauty come to us ? Assuredly not from the mere clash of atoms and the struggle for existence. It is the alliance of something in us to an infinite beauty without.

As long, indeed, as man retains his sense of beauty, and the sense, so closely allied with it, of vastness, of immensity, his world will continue to stir the deepest in him. The two things which bowed the austere spirit of Kant, " the starry heavens above and the moral law within," will not lose their force. That was a fine reply which the Brittany peasant made to the officers of the Revolution who proposed to pull down the village church tower to wean the people from superstition : " You may pull down our church tower, but you cannot pull down the stars." But if the heavens and the earth thus speak to us, their voice becomes most articulate when expressed

through man himself—not, indeed, so much by his words as by his life, his deed. It is the finest of all tributes to humanity that it is humanity itself that has made our world holy. Is it not something that man has universally and instinctively put his final award only on the highest qualities? He has often been greedy, selfish, luxurious, but he has never canonised greed or luxury. He has called his cities and his famous places after the names of saints and heroes. He has made the glory of a state, of a town to consist, not in its numbers or wealth, but in its service to the higher interests. There is a certain exaggeration in this saying of Renan, yet a truth in it: "What is the whole of America beside a ray of that infinite glory with which a city of the second or third order—Florence, Pisa, Siena, Perugia—shines in Italy?" Will not Chicago or New York, prodigious as they are, have to do something beyond what they are yet known for before they are registered in the human consciousness as "holy places"? The mind's verdicts here are singularly discriminating. They cut through all the ordinary conventions, through all the voices of the moment. We walk along the Appian Way, feeling that we could kiss the stones of it, not because it has witnessed the triumphs of consuls and emperors, but because St. Paul had trodden it. We worship at the grimmest places, before prisons and scaffold sites, before the gaol at Bedford, where Bunyan lay; in the Grassmarket at Edinburgh, where Covenanters were hanged. We are oblivious there of the triumph of the despot, of the shout of the blood-thirsty populace. We see only the glory of conscience, the triumph of great spirits over ignominious death.

Of Holy Places

But the sacred places, rightly so named, are not by any means all of this character. It were ill for us if they were. One delights to think of the innumerable spots on the earth where truth and faith have combined with beauty and art; where the higher qualities of the spirit have joyously expressed themselves in the works of genius and religion. The Middle Ages, and chiefly the marvellous eleventh century, have left us imperishable monuments here, which sanctify the place they stand on. Who shall call that an inferior, an uninspired age which gives to Italy St. Mark's at Venice, Pisa's glorious pile, the cathedrals of Milan, Modena, Parma; which in North Europe broke out into a foam of lovely structures—Mayence, Treves, Worms, Basel, Brussels; which in France blossomed into the Abbey Church of Cluny, with Chartres, Rouen, and the pile of Notre Dame; that in England saw Westminster and Canterbury grow to their majestic proportions, and Wells, that dream of beauty! To-day we do not build like that. We are smart and up-to-date. Our structures exhibit our wealth of means, our poverty of ideas. We can make brave show of our marbles and our gildings; but our stones are dead stones; there is no breath in them. It will be when faith is again found upon earth that we shall once more make buildings that are prayers and triumph songs; that stone, kindled once more by inspired breath, shall express again man's sense of immortal life.

Great cities, great cathedrals, sublime scenery, world-famed spots where mighty heroisms and tragedies were enacted; are these, then, the chief, the only holy places? Alas! most of us go through

life without seeing these. Happily there are some, and they, after all, the most precious, nearer home. They are, in fact, at home, and without stirring out of doors. That was a great word which Luther spoke when he told the maidens and housewives of Germany that in scrubbing floors and going about their household duties they were accomplishing just as great a work in the sight of heaven as the monks and priests with their penances and holy offices. Indeed, it had been said before Luther, and by a woman. Margery Baxter, the Lollardist of the fifteenth century, had the pith of the matter. "If," she said to her sisters, "ye desire to see the true Cross of Christ, I will show it to you at home in your own house." Stretching out her arms she said: "This is the true Cross of Christ, thou mightest and mayest behold and worship in thine own house; and therefore it is but vain to run to the church to worship dead Crosses." In a word, holiness is in our daily service, and the holy places are where it is faithfully done.

Well for us, indeed, is it when we feel our place of work, whatever it is, to be a holy place. We have no pity for that old Methodist weaver, a preacher as well as a weaver, who, when asked where he got all his good things from, replied "Behind my loom, sir!" To have your dingy workshop made the trysting-spot of noble, uplifting thought—this is a happy enough destiny. Whatever we think of Machiavelli, one cannot help appreciating the fine passage where he describes, in the time of his poverty and exile, the hours he spent of an evening with the great literatures; when, divesting himself of his rustic attire,

"Suitably clothed I enter within the ancient courts of ancient men, by whom, being cordially welcomed, I am fed

with the food that alone is mine. . . And these men in their humanity reply to me, and for the space of four hours I feel no weariness, remember no trouble, no longer fear poverty, no longer dread death, when my being is absorbed in them."

Yes, truly the scholar's sanctum, where he finds himself in contact with great minds, with high thinking, with truth's illimitable reach spread before him, is no bad abiding place.

We think of time often as a kind of place. It is at least a journey, along which we move. And it was a wonderful achievement of humanity, at so early a period of its evolution, to secure in its daily progress a plot of ground for each week and make it Sabbatical. Sunday is changing its aspect ; it has changed it enormously within the lifetime of some of us. With most of the new feeling we can sympathise. Many of the old restrictions were irksome, having their origin in hard legalism and unworthy fear. But it will be an immeasurable loss to humanity if Sunday ceases to be holy. We need to keep this plot hedged round. Its flowers are the loveliest of human culture, and we cannot bear to see them trodden under foot. Shall we disfranchise our week of this one precious, unique element in it ? Can we afford to lose that ineffable aroma of peace and love and sacred thought that to Christian souls has, week by week, for ages stolen in on our sordid atmosphere as a breath from another world ? In our crowded towns the authorities are everywhere seeking to secure for the people parks and open spaces where grass and flowers may grow, and where the clogged lungs may inhale a breath of the country. And Sunday has been in the week our open space, where our wearied populations may find their souls—

may lift their eyes towards life's nobler ideals, and breathe, for a little space, a serener and a diviner air. Shall we cease to feel the thrill of holy George Herbert when in his quaint, exquisite words he sings :

> " The Sundays of man's life,
> Threaded together on Time's string,
> Make bracelets to adorn the wife
> Of the eternal, glorious King.
> On Sunday, Heaven's gate stands ope,
> Blessings are plentiful and rife,
> More plentiful than hope ! "

Let joy of all sorts abound on Sunday ; let there be mirth and laughter in it. But for heaven's sake let us not shut off its loftier significance ; let us not allow a drab materialism to roof us in, shutting us off from sight of the stars.

We end as we began. When all is said, it is the soul of man that is this world's holiest place. Our highest business here is, by God's help, to cleanse it and to render it fit for Divine abidings. Our earth has always been consecrated by the presence in it of noble spirits, whose departures have left the savour of this life behind. And there is to be more of that. As the plant looks upward to the sun, so our humanity, however far it may stray, will return to that attitude. In God it will seek its final goal and good. It will find in fulness that of which Augustine, out of his experience, hints in wonderful words :

> " Where there shineth unto my soul what space cannot contain, and there soundeth what time beareth not away, what breathing disperseth not, what eating diminisheth not, and there cleaveth what satiety discovereth not—this is it which I feel when I love my God."

Our wide earth, when it bears upon it everywhere souls of this calibre, carrying in them such joy and height of service, will indeed be a " holy place."

XX

ON BEING ORIGINAL

As we watch the movement of society we find it to consist of opposing forces which contend stoutly with each other, the final result of which is another movement taking a direction of its own. The action here is like that of the centripetal and centrifugal energies which work at the same time upon our planet—the one pulling it towards the sun and the other away from it, the final effect of which is to send it round its appointed orbit. Of these oppositions, operating in the social sphere, one of the most noteworthy is the clash between our class instincts and our individual instincts. On the one side we see a vast accumulation of desires and motives which urge us to sink our individuality in that of a group, of an order, of a fashion. On the other hand there is in most of us, and in some to an extravagant degree, the feeling for self-expression, to do or say things which strike the attention of our fellows; the vanity which asks, as the Romans used to say, *digito monstrari* (to be pointed out by the finger) to be regarded as a somebody, a person to be taken note of. The two elements are primitive; they are there in us all, in a more or less degree. Their action is seen in all the departments of life—in politics, in religion, in literature, in our social intercourse. It is an instructive study to observe their inter-action,

and to try and find out the principles which should regulate their effect upon us.

There is, to begin with, the enormous force, working both within and without us, which limits, confines, and tends to stamp out our separate individuality. Take, for instance, the fashion instinct. You go to a West-end club, or attend a society dinner, and you will find all the men dressed alike. They are the bond-slaves of their tailor. Imagine, if you can, a member of the " classes " appearing at one of these functions in a suit of leather, such as George Fox cut out for himself ! It is entirely unthinkable. A man in society may fail to pay his debts, may commit suicide, or run away with his neighbour's wife ; what he will not do is to dress contrary to the mode. A sheep does not more consistently clothe itself in wool than does our man about town in the style of the hour. The conformity goes much farther. Our upper classes are trained not only to dress alike, but to think, and act, and speak alike. Our public schools are machines for the manufacture of machines. It is the pride of Eton and Harrow, of Oxford and Cambridge, that their alumni shall have the public school and 'varsity manner, their accent, their code of honour. The religion of these people is never a thoughtout-religion. It is largely a department of their social code. Has anyone ever heard of a peer becoming a Baptist or a Primitive Methodist ? There are Baptists who may rise to the peerage, but did you ever hear of one born in the purple becoming one by conviction ? Conviction is the last thing concerned. It is from first to last a class affair—an affair of the correct thing. A gentleman is an Anglican, or, at second best, a Roman Catholic. He may be even an

agnostic in his private views ; what he can never come down to is the vulgarity of dissent. We have in these circles a vast assemblage of people who, under the force of this class pressure, have become machine-made articles ; whose views, whose actions, whose votes on any question, you may as surely count on as the cotton spinner may count on the action of the raw material which goes into his looms.

And the power which works for the repression of the individual amongst the upper ten is seen, under different circumstances, at work to produce similar results lower down. Our working men, in their present position, have no great chance of being original. We have, for a long time past now, been providing against that by the specialisation of industry. Compare the chances here of the modern factory hand with the old-time farm labourer. What a widely-trained man, in what a varied region of interests, was the old agriculturist ? He could plough, sow, reap, thrash, mow, thatch, shear. He knew the weather signs, the secrets of poultry and stock rearing ; he was learned in woodcraft ; could tell birds by their call ; knew the cult of plants and of flowers. Compare this varied learning with that of the artisan who tends a machine for making the tenth part of a pin, or the hammering of a boot sole ; who knows that, and that only ! The field labourer was alive over a dozen interests ; the fresh air he breathed kept his mind alert ; his very poaching was an art. His son, crowded into the modern factory, his brain clogged with bad air, has his mind concentrated on a pin-point, and itself in the process reduced to a pin-point. The tendency of modern civilisation, in its action on the industrial

classes, seems to be to reduce the range of their mental activities ; to infect them by the very closeness of their association, with the contagion of the same ideas ; to submerge them in the same emotional waves ; in a word, to reduce their individuality to a minimum.

In our further search for originality we are naturally led to the intellectuals ; to the men of learning, of research, whose lives are passed in the handling of ideas. But even here, when we look closely, the results are hardly encouraging. We are born into a late period of the world, a period when, some aver, all the things have been said, all the stories told. That, by the way, is a very old complaint. There is that outburst of the Roman satirist : "*Pereant isti qui ante nos nostra dixerunt*" (Confound the fellows who said our good things before us !). The more you read, the more you despair of finding anything new. Bishop Huet, of the seventeenth century, was said to be the best-read man the world had seen. The greater part of his ninety years had been given exclusively to study. His valets read to him when he was getting up and going to bed. And he read all day. He said the substance of everything that had been written could be put into nine or ten folios. As we pore over the modern output in history, in philosophy, in theology, in literature, what a wearisome *réchauffé* it mostly is ! The newest thing turns out to be as old as Adam. Herbert Spencer gives you evolution. You will find an earlier prophet of it in Democritus. In the seventeenth century Descartes startled the world by what was held to be an absolutely original system of philosophy. Beginning with a universal doubt,

he worked back towards what he conceived to be the one absolute certainty, the certainty of our own consciousness, as expressed in his famous formula, "*Cogito, ergo sum*" (I think, therefore I am). From that he works his way back to what he holds to be a system of truth. A refreshingly new idea! But we go back across long centuries of thinking to find that Augustine, studying in his day this problem of certainty, has followed it in precisely the same way, down to the use of the very same formula. He, too, has his *Cogito, ergo sum.* It has been since a disputed question whether Descartes was here a plagiarist, or whether he offers another example of two minds working independently to the same conclusion. Truly, in these directions the way of originality is hard.

One is stopped here indeed with the question whether it is possible for any of us, even for the greatest minds, to be in any true sense original. Are we not all, in the very nature of things, copyists? Take the great painters, the makers of new schools—your Velasquez, your Rembrandt, your Titian, your Turner. Where does their pre-eminence lie but in the fact that they, better than their fellows, have given us nature as she is; have reproduced, more faithfully than others, her subtle combination, her mysteries of form, of light and shade? And the scientist, with his latest discoveries, what is he after all but a reporter of truths that are as old as the world? That they are new to us in no wise makes them new in themselves. He, too, at best, is a copier, a reporter, keener sighted than his fellows, of nature's ancient plan. So is it in poetry, in literature generally. The greatest names are those who represent

to us, more vividly and truly than others, things as they are. Shakespeare's creations command us because of their truth to character ; because of their accurate report of the mysteries of the soul. His function is "to hold the mirror up to nature." Flaubert opened to his disciple Maupassant what he conceived to be the secret of style.

"Look at a flock of sheep, or at a heap of stones in the road. Single out one sheep, or one stone. Find out in what respect your sheep or stone differs from all other sheep or stones. And now find the one word which expounds that difference ; and there you have the secret of style."

In the view of that master of style the secret lay in perfect accuracy of description. The artist in literature is the faithful copyist.

Is there, then, no originality ? Yes, plenty of it. We have only to limit its reference, and to abate somewhat in certain directions the extravagance of its claims. Nature herself is full of originality. The newer evolution doctrine, especially in the epigenesis form on which the German naturalists have so much to say, and which is being so brilliantly expounded by Bergson, offers us a world which is continually bringing forth the new, the unexpected. The very plants start, seemingly of themselves, into fresh, unlooked-for expressions of their life. The cosmic vitality has endless hidden treasures of force and beauty yet to appear. And you, gentle reader, whoever and whatever you may be, are at least a new thing in the world. You may be the least conspicuous of your fellows, known to the smallest imaginable circle. But you have your distinction. It is this—that not in all the ages before, and not in all the ages to come, has there been, or will be, anyone like you. No one has shared your inner

feeling; no one has followed the same career; no one partakes, in the same way, of your fate in life. The supreme guarantee of our separate originality is in our possession of that grandest and at the same time the most perilous of our endowments, the freedom of the will. Here, in this hazardous realm, where we may win or lose so much, is the sphere where we may create that new thing, ourselves. It is in the realm of life and character, above all of moral character, that our originality will show itself.

How shall we conduct ourselves here; how shall we deal with these possibilities? There are all manner of false and stupid ways. There are people who aim at originality in the interests of self-conceit, and they make a poor affair of it. They will, at all costs, be something special. They contradict for the sake of contradiction. They cut themselves off from the common faith because it is common. They adopt a pose; they will show their neighbour what a fool he is. They aim at notoriety; they succeed in being ridiculous. The real originals are not of this type at all. The last thing they think of is to create a furore; they are occupied with such different, such deeper things. They are concerned, it is true, much with themselves, but in their own way. Endowed with this mysterious possession of the inner life, with all its vastness of possible good and evil, they study its nature, examine its powers, its limitations, explore it backward in search of its source. The search brings them in contact with a vaster life than their own, a life which lays upon them its obligations, its imperatives. And so they become original by dint of a force that is behind them, the great Original which seeks to express itself within and through

them. And so they move on to great things; to greater than they know. "The man who goes farthest," said Cromwell, "is the man who does not know where he is going." But he is sure that Another knows. The original man is a man of large convictions. He has to believe much in order to do much. Says a modern French writer: "*Le peu que nous croyons tient au peu que nous sommes*" (the littleness of our belief is a measure of the littleness of our character). To believe nothing is to do nothing. The most conspicuous figures in history have been people of the widest, firmest faith. They have cut so deep into the world's life because of the immensity of the pressure behind them. Whether it is Augustine in the fifth century, or Bernard in the twelfth, or Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth, or Luther in the sixteenth, the originators of the world's best and deepest life have ever been men of belief; not ours, perhaps, but always of their own.

And yet, observe, these men were always something more than their creed. They derived their force from their vital connection with the highest that they knew. They fed at the sources of life. And this life, which dominated them, delighted to show itself in richer, subtler forms than the beliefs which they held. The character in them was so far beyond words. The personality they had reached had become a tree on which grew all manner of fruits. Their followers felt a fascination which could not be put into speech, because it was beyond speech. It is holiness which gives the world its greatest surprises. Thinking nothing of itself, it is the greatest self the world possesses. Our own age has, in large measure, to reform its convictions; but its

one chance of progress is in men and women whose allegiance is as true as theirs of old to the highest and best ; whose life, open as was theirs to the infinite, receives from it the continuous reinforcement of its incalculable forces.

We speak here of women as well as men. When we seek for the originality of great men we find it so often in woman. The character of Wesley derived itself not so much from his father as from his wonderful mother. And Bernard's moral genius founded itself in the noble qualities of his mother Aletta. Augustine, in his Confessions, has told us what he owed to Monica. And where it has not been a mother it has been a sister, as we see in a Renan and a Pascal. A sublime story this, of hidden lives, content to express themselves in another whom they loved and trained ! And that is not all. One of the most original characters in this world's history was that of a woman, a girl. The plain facts of the life of Joan of Arc are fuller of the miraculous than most of the wonder-stories. Here is a great kingdom, torn with factions, in the grip of the foreign invader, hopeless of relief. Its sovereign, its aristocracy, its priesthood, its armies, its mailed knights—men turn to them in vain. And from the forests of Dauphiny there comes a simple peasant maid, without ancestry, without learning, without name—herself only—her strength in her purity, in her faith, in her indomitable will ; answering to the inner call, urged by impulses she could not analyse, but whose power she knew. She appears, and it is as though heaven had opened on her country ; the voice within her becomes its message of deliverance. Dauphin and court, warriors and statesmen, obey it. The

armies march, the maid at their head. They fight under her ægis as though she were a new Pallas, Minerva. The foe is expelled, the kingdom reunited, its sovereign crowned by her hand at Rheims. Her mission ends in martyrdom ; she passes in blood and fire. With a story like this before us who shall put limit to the possibilities of woman ! She has been, so far, a suppressed force in human affairs. May it not be that that very suppression has stored up in her sub-conscious qualities which are yet to play a momentous and undreamt-of part in the human evolution ?

Humanity will never cease to be original. Nature has yet her sublime secrets, hid deep in the human soil, which she has yet to unfold in character and life. The true originality is not in greatness or smallness. The violet is as original as the giant oak, and as necessary to the perfectness of the whole. Our happiness lies in accepting ourselves ; not in seeking to be other than that, but in finding the best in that. Our little life, with its meagre powers, it limitations, its weakness and its pain—is it not enough that this, too, is a new thing in the world, with its own appointed weight and consequence in the scheme of things, without which the scheme were not complete ? Is it not enough that we hold it as a Divine trust, committed to our keeping, to do the best with that we can ?

XXI

WHEN IT IS OVER

WHAT is the best standpoint from which to view life? We have a front view—before the thing we contemplate is done; a view *in medias res*, when in the thick of the experience; and a back view, when the action or the period is over. No one of them is complete without the others; each brings to us its own special flavour, which must be tasted before we can give an accurate judgment. Even then the judgment will be woefully partial and incomplete. For there is another necessary standpoint which we never attain—the one, namely, from above. A 'bus horse in a London street has, in a way, all the three view-points we have mentioned, and yet his idea as to what he is there for, what is the meaning of his life, it he has any at all, is so far from the fact. His driver has so widely different an idea of his meaning. And the driver's view is just now being superseded by that of the motor-'bus proprietor, who regards the horse as a back number, whose immediate business is to disappear, to make room for something speedier. Our 'bus horse is unconscious of all this, and is the happier for it. Who knows that we, in our turn, as we jog along between the shafts, may not have eyes upon us from above, which regard our position and prospects in a way equally remote from our own? We remember Nietzsche's notion that we

are a bridge, a sort of transition phase, on the way to something better than ourselves ; and that strange outburst of Goethe: "I forsee the time when God will have no more joy in men, but will break up everything for a renewed creation." Well, whatever the future may have in store, we are here now, for all that we are worth. And if we are here to be the creators of something better, that, in itself, is not an ignoble destiny. Enough for us to know that the position we have reached is no despicable one, and that the power that moves within us is kindly, that means us good and not evil. And against Goethe we may say: If God were ever likely to be tired of us He would have been tired long ago. We have given Him such sufficient reason !

In this limited life-view of ours, each of our possible standpoints has, we say, its value, especially when we compare their results. An action, a period, is one thing in prospect, another when it is adoing, and quite another when it is over. It is vastly instructive for us, an essential of wisdom, that we judge of the first two in the light thrown upon them by the last. For then, and then only, is it that we get the whole product ; then, and then only, can we judge truly about the thing we have been doing. We will deal with all this presently. But first some more general considerations.

When it is over. The saying is pertinent to all we know of visible existence. To all beginnings we see endings. The very moment, indeed, of beginning is the moment of ending, for it is the moment of change from what existed in the instant before. We think of the vast geologic ages, stretching through their interminable tracts of time ; of the silent

mountains, in contrast with which our brief, fevered life seems an instant against an eternity, and we seem here in the region of the unending. But our feeling is an illusion. Nature, in her least mobile forms, is never at a standstill. A clearer eye than ours would see the hourly movement of the granite hills; would note the daily hastening of suns and systems to their extinction. But the point to note is that these ends are never final ones. They are always the starting-point of a new beginning. And the new thing that starts is better than the old thing which ends. The change is a progress. In the planet's history the stage of fiery vapour is succeeded by one of solidification, of the forming of continents and seas. After the ages of death comes the awakening of life. Life's lower savage forms are followed by higher ones. "First, that which is natural, then that which is spiritual." And if, as our scientists say, the upward movement is succeeded by a seeming downward one; if decay follows development; if the cooling of our sun will mean the death of our system—what then? If decay, as we now see it, is always part of the process of renewal, a clearing of the lumber to make way for the better things, may not that be the rule over this wider realm? If, as we see here and now, nothing perishes in perishing, but dies only to be renewed, do we suppose this order is reversed in the catastrophe of suns and systems? If, in material things, nothing is destroyed, will not this also be true of spiritual things? Can we believe that the long results of the soul's discipline, as carried on through the ages of human history, can have any other end than that of a new expression and expansion in some other sphere?

We have had a long experience of seeming endings and of what has followed them. On His Cross Jesus cried, "It is finished." And surely much was finished there. The disciples who fled from the scene thought that Christianity was finished. We know it was making its great start. Those same disciples thought the end of the world was upon them; that theirs was the closing scene of human history. We know that instead they were at the beginning of it. The ages since have seen some similar false alarms. Have our readers ever looked into the chronicles of the tenth century? They are instructive reading. They record the greatest world-panic known to history. It was the solid conviction of Christendom that the year 1000, when the thousand years of the Apocalypse would be completed, would bring in the Day of Judgment and the end of all things. As the fated year approached signs and portents of the most awful kind were everywhere reported, deepening into a state of agony the universal terror. Year after year there was horrible weather, sunless summers, devastating rains and floods, no harvests, widespread famines, fearful plagues, earthquakes, conflagrations. All business and commerce came to an end. People left their homes and families, fled to the monasteries, camped out in the fields, waiting in sheer delirium for "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The year came and passed, and still the fear remained, for ecclesiastics pronounced that the thousand years dated from the Passion of Christ and not from His birth. But 1033 also came and passed—and our old earth continued its placid revolution, oblivious of theology! It was over, and nothing had happened. The late Mr. Baxter would have been in his element

in the tenth century. Prophecy of this kind has had its vogue, though there are still professors of it. Most of us are beginning to understand that the cosmic order is on a somewhat wider scale than appears in these cheap vaticinations. One might fill volumes with false predictions of this kind. "It is over," has so often been said when the thing has just begun. Erasmus thought Luther was quite dead and done with after the scene at Worms. Leo X. shared his idea. When Luther's theses were presented to him he said: "When he has slept off his wine he will know better." It was Leo and not Luther who was destined to "know better." Arthur Young wrote from France in 1789, that the gathering of the States General marked the end of the Revolution. "It is all over." We know the sequel. Our ends are so often beginnings.

But let us get closer to our personal life. It is, as we have said, the back view, the view of the moment after, when a given sensation, a given experience, is "over," that we get the truest taste of life, the soul's surest verdict upon it. That after-taste is nature's first ethical lesson, the opening chapter of her book of the Spirit. And we find nowhere, in any written or spoken word, a clearer revelation, a more dogmatic announcement of spiritual law and a spiritual kingdom. You may choose a debauch, a riot of licentiousness, a career devoted entirely to selfish pleasures. What you cannot choose is the quality and taste of the deposit they leave behind. No chemistry, no manipulation of elements, can concoct out of these ingredients an after-relish that is satisfying. It is when you compare the moment after an orgy with the moment after an act of sacrifice,

of danger dared, of duty done, that you see as with a flash into nature's heart, and find it the heart of a holy God. The *lendemain de fête*, when the fête has become a riot of the senses, is a revealing to-morrow. The departing pleasures leave with their votary a mocking laugh. Beneath that, if the soul is attentive, will be heard a still small voice which whispers—it is the spirit's deepest word—" Arise ye and depart, for *this* is not your rest."

Our theme, in this personal aspect of it, has another lesson not less important for us. How is it that we leave our appreciation of life, of its best experiences, till the good time is over? That " our blessings brighten as they take their flight," is more than a statement of fact. It is an indictment of our common sense. We are continually underrating our opportunities until we have lost them. For years we have enjoyed that greatest of human privileges, the possession of a circle of friends. There are teachers who have opened to us the way of truth; noble helpers who have stood by us in the time of storm and stress; hearts of gold that have offered us freely of their treasures. One after another of these passes away, and then we remember that we have failed to tell them what we owed; what their friendship was to us. We hasten to pay our tribute to their memory; but " why," we ask, " did we not pay it when they could hear and know? " Now it is over, and our word of praise is for others' ears, not their own. We are amazed at ourselves at not making more of them while we could. How entirely we are with Lamb in his lament over a dead friend: " I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again to be quarrelling with

him (for we quarrelled sometimes), rather than not have him again!" The feeling is sorest when the relation is most intimate. Carlyle's great heart is torn with anguish when, mourning his dead wife, he realises how inadequately, and with what sad interruptions, his love for her had been expressed. It is the grief of all surviving lovers—

> "For she is in her grave, and oh!
> The difference to me!"

The dead are beyond us, but there are things that remain; the τὰ ἐπί σοι, as Epictetus says—"the things in your own power." The living are with us, and with them all the possibilities of an ideal relationship. In creating and sustaining that ideal it will be a help we cannot afford to lose to draw back, at times, our future into our present; to order our words and deeds in the light of the day that is coming, when the relationship is over and only memory remains.

But that is not the whole of it. It is a great thing to make the most of the present by doing our duty in it the best way we know. That, however, is not all. Life would not be half as rich as it is if it were simply an affair of duty. It is an affair also of appreciation, of enjoyment, of feeling and realising our whole selves. And we need to do that now. Things are being continually taken from us, but after all what a treasure remains! What, after all, are your losses, when God and the universe and your own soul remain to you? Your spring, summer and part of the autumn of life, maybe, have passed away. You are in life's November. Well, has not November its pleasures? They are there if you will look for

them. The dark days are splendid for work, most of all for inward work. We like that saying in "Marcus the Epicurean"—of Cornelius Fronto: "The wise old man . . . would seem to have carefully and consciously replaced each natural trait of youth, as it departed from him, by an equivalent grace of culture." When you have learnt the grace of a full appreciation, you will value and rejoice in what you have, though it be less in quantity than of old, far more than you valued the abundance of old, when the appreciation was lacking. "Hold fast by the present," says Goethe; "every situation, nay, every moment, is of infinite worth, for it is the representation of a whole eternity." It is there now, it will be gone directly; what folly not to extract what there is in it while it is here!

We have said earlier that things are never really over when they seem to be, and we may end upon that. Life is protean. It is continually changing its shape. But it never changes itself out of existence. Its streams have a habit of disappearing, of going underground. But they are there, all the same, working in the dark, and emerging by and by on other fields. A great religious revival sweeps over a country, engaging all minds, submerging all other interests in the flood of its enthusiasm. It reaches its height, declines, and seems to pass away. But it is not a spent force; it is only a transmuted one. The student of history sees it working in the next generation in a revival of arts, of industries, of intellectual power, and preparing the way for another and deeper religious expression. Life's most forbidding form is that of suffering; so forbidding that at times we can scarce reconcile it with the idea of a

Divine Providence. But—and that should be sufficient for our faith—suffering never stops at suffering. When it is, as we say, over, it emerges, for one thing, as happiness. Who would have missed the joy of deliverance, the ecstasy of escape? And it comes out, too, as wisdom, tenderness, refinement, sympathy. What would the teacher be worth who has not suffered? What lessons are comparable in moral value to those learned in that school? And what would our own soul have been worth without its sorrows? And, ah! when it *is* over, finally over, what then?

> "Sleepe after toil, port after stormy seas,
> Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please."

"Death after life does greatly please." Yes, because death after life has for its corollary life after death. Death is the winter of our human existence. But, "when winter comes, shall spring be far behind?" Here, too, we may be well assured, the end is a new beginning.

XXII

OF THINGS WE SHARE

In the matter of ownership, of the possession of property, there are discernible to-day two movements in opposite directions, each proceeding with a steadily increasing velocity and momentum, and between which a collision seems, sooner or later, inevitable. There is on the one side the accumulation of property in ever fewer hands. There are Scottish estates which stretch over counties ; where mountains and moors, free to the world in the old days, are now shut off from the traveller by notice-boards ; where the small cotters have been driven in thousands to make way for game preserves and deer drives. In America a recent Commission has revealed the fact that one-third of the wealth of the United States is controlled by two men. In both the Old and the New World the money kings have become a kind of sea, into which all the rivers flow. Against this movement we have the other—a vast uprising of opinion, not by any means confined to the "have-nots," which demands a reversal of this process ; which proclaims a war against poverty, and insists upon such a sharing of this world's goods as shall secure to every individual the conditions of physical and moral well-being. And there seems little doubt as to which will win in the end. The many will conquer the few. And that not simply because the few are few, and the many

are many, but because the many have amongst them the world's best thinking, and, still more, the world's newly awakened moral sense. It is being perceived that, properly managed, the common estate is big enough for us all. As a modern writer puts it :

> " If the world's invention came to a standstill, we could with such science as we now command, produce, or exchange for our production, far more food, houses, clothes, furniture, and other commodities, than we actually need ; and this while our population enjoyed ample leisure in which to develop their higher faculties."

We are already on the road to this wider distribution. It is now actually in progress, and it will go on at an ever-accelerating rate. Do we like this prospect ? One has only to read the newspapers to see how unpopular it is in many influential quarters. It goes against many ancient and stubborn instincts. The natural man prefers filling his pockets to emptying them. The point of view of the man who has, and who is invited to disgorge, is so radically different from that of the man who has not and proposes to share, that there seems no possibility of bringing them into accord. And yet we believe that accord can be reached, and will be. It will take a long time, and there will doubtless be quarrels on the road ; but already the line of advance is opening to us. Certain considerations, inward facts of experience, are coming into view which are potent for reconciliation. They are potent by showing us that sharing, in so far as we already know it, does not hurt any of us, rich or poor ; that when properly entered into it is more productive of happiness, of general well-being, than not sharing ; that we enjoy ourselves better, and make more inward progress along these lines than on the opposite ones.

For already, over the greater part of our lives, we are sharers ; and we get on so excellently under that *régime* that we may welcome without fear whatever further extensions of it may be in store. Nature, to begin there, is plainly a communist. Were she in Parliament, she would doubtless be furiously attacked for her politics, but she does not trouble to conceal them. Her arrangements, so far as we do not interfere with them, are sublimely indifferent to property qualifications. Her sunlight is of the same quality for the duke as for the peasant. Does the duke enjoy it any the less because it is shining with equal power and with the same exhilarating effect upon the peasant ? Doubtless there are people ill-natured enough and grasping enough to make a corner in sunshine if they could. But we do not believe that dukes feel any the less happy because their gamekeepers enjoy a fine morning as much as they do. What inveterate communists, too, are the qualities of things ! Water, fire, know no distinctions in their treatment of us. The one will wash you, cool you, quench you, on occasion drown you ; the fire will warm you, or burn you, without any regard to your status. The taste of an orange is as good in the mouth of John Smith as in that of His Grace. Are the highest of us any the worse in thought or in feeling because we are put here on the same common level ?

In this community of possession we have been, in various directions, following nature, and always with good results. All the roads in England are common property. The day labourer and the prince of the blood have there exactly the same right of way. You walk down Piccadilly, you turn into Hyde Park.

Is the bustle of the one, the open space and greenery of the other, the less enjoyable that other people beside you have the same rights there? We can imagine a multi-millionaire buying up Piccadilly and keeping it as promenade for himself alone. Would he be any happier for that exclusion? Does not the fascination of a city lie in the fact that its bustle, the sweep and stir of its movement are the expressions of a life in which everybody takes his right? Let our millionaire walk solitary along his emptied road. He would soon be tired of it, and cry out to his fellows to come and help him out of his misery. Do we not see that the community of possession here, so far from diminishing, from impoverishing us, is in every aspect of it an enrichment? By it we are so much larger than without it; larger in our interests, in our sympathies. Our personality is richer by all the varied elements we are partaking of in common with our fellows. As we tramp on the open road, or in the city street, we have intact all our private treasures of thought and feeling. We are better off all round, in no one degree poorer, because we say, of road and street, not "it is mine," but "it is ours."

As we come from the outer to the inner we find ever new applications of the same principle. Here, more intimately and more definitely, nature has proclaimed her law of the life in common. You go to a meeting to listen to a great speaker. His speech is a miracle, more wonderful in its way than the feeding of the five thousand of the Gospel story. In that story the loaves and fishes were consumed; what was left over was something newly added, newly created. But this spiritual bread of the speaker's discourse is distributed without loss or diminution.

It is there in the man as much as when he began. And it has entered, in the same volume, in the same rounded completeness, into every soul that has listened to it. Your neighbour on the same bench has received all of it, and yet has not diminished by a single word the whole which *you* have received. What is more, in this wonderful sharing, you discover that your enjoyment of the feast, so far from being lessened by the other man's possession, has been enormously increased by it. His enthusiasm has augmented yours. Your soul has become enlarged by its union with all these brother souls. How poor an affair, in comparison would it have been, if the speech were addressed to you alone in an empty hall !

And what is true of the public meeting is true of the whole region of thought. In literature we live the life of sharing. We have nothing there, and want nothing, that is exclusively our own. Shakespeare is just as much mine as he is yours, and no more. Should I be happier if I were the only one who knew anything about him? We can imagine Mr. Rockefeller engaging an author to write for him alone. He could pay him any sum he asked for the volume, and keep off everybody else from access to its pages. We would not ourselves give twopence for such a satisfaction. The glory of knowledge is that it is, or is on the way to being, a common knowledge. When we read Kant or Newton's "Principia," we are treading no private path. We are on a broad highway trodden by multitudes of students, and to be trodden by millions more. Astronomy, chemistry, geology, all the sciences, are open spaces, with no walls of prohibition, no notice-boards warning you off.

And it is because they are so completely open, so entirely communistic, that they are so gloriously powerful, so triumphantly progressive. Here every mind that wills can disport itself, can make its own criticisms, can add its own researches. Make these sciences private property and you have thereby drained their life-blood. There have been experiments in that direction, notably in the departments of religion and theology. Ecclesiastics and their allies the dogmatists, in the supposed interests of faith, have tried to make certain territories of inquiry into protected enclosures from which intruders are warned off. They shut up their creeds, their sacred books, their theologic systems within a glass-house, to which no entrance is admitted except by a password. But that is a fight not so much against men as against nature—that obstinate believer in fresh air, in freedom, and the common right. Under her inexorable law a protected, shut up faith becomes a dying faith. A religion which relies for its support, not on the free assent of the soul, but on penalties, on ostracisms, on theological bullying, has pronounced upon itself the doom of decay and death.

The region of ideas, of the mind's activities, is essentially a communistic region. A great invention is never a private property. A man may get his patent rights, and he is welcome to them. But the common interest in the new discovery speedily overflows all particularist ones. George Stephenson makes a fortune with his railway, but the old woman who goes by train instead of by market cart takes, without paying him anything, her full share of his idea. When she lights her room with gas instead of the old farthing dip, she is, on the same terms, a

shareholder in the new idea. And the fellowship of these activities is never one only of receiving. It is one also of giving. The man of ideas can never work alone. He is of no use except as one of a community of fellow-workers. So long as his creative thought is a private property it is powerless. It cannot come to birth without assistance. He must share it with the capitalist, with the experts of a dozen different skills ; eventually with an army of men who fashion it into stone or iron ; who plough it into the earth, or drive it through the seas. The communism here goes backwards as well as forwards. Stephenson could not have got his locomotive unless someone ages before, of whom he never heard, had invented the wheel. There would have been no gas lighting apart from the unknown researcher who found out that coal would burn. In all this region of things we see how the idea of exclusiveness, of possessing a thing for ourselves alone, breaks down before that higher law, imposed by nature for our highest good, under which we exist for the community, and the community for us.

The higher we get, the more clearly and commandingly stands out this law of sharing. Religion, as we know it, has this for its bottom principle. It is an individual property, for each may have all there is of it. But that full possession of ours diminishes in no degree the fulness of it for everybody else. The common sharing is part of the happiness it gives. We are richer in saying " we," than in saying " I." Its Leader is One for all. In the gaze of faith which we direct towards Him the prince and the peasant are on precisely the same footing. What there is for the one is just what there is for the other. The

Christian calling and election are no exclusive affair. The chosen are chosen as agents and conductors of the universal blessing ; chosen as are the mountains, whose peaks collect the snows, to send them in fertilising streams to the lower valleys. We have the vaguest ideas of the conditions of the future life ; but we have one certain fact about it. No one takes into it the possessions, in the shape of money and goods, which he has accumulated here. The property he carries there is an invisible one, such as may belong to the beggar as much as to the millionaire. It is reported, indeed, that Lazarus began with a better capital than the rich man whose gate he haunted.

The result of our researches seems, then, to point in one direction. In all the departments of life we have considered—and they cover a very considerable portion of the whole—we gain by sharing, and we lose by excluding. Why, then, should we fear the further extension of a principle which works so well wherever it has been tried ? We shall all be happier and freer when the whole community is happier and freer. We shall the better enjoy our dinner when we know that nobody is going without one. The accumulated well-being of a whole people will be, for the individual, what the accumulated enthusiasm of a great audience is for each member of it. The mighty pulse of the whole will flow through every separate personality, and fill it with its own fulness. In the gradual process which brings about this result —for it will be an evolution not a revolution—those who give up will, in so doing, make an investment which will yield them better dividends than they ever knew before. They will be the sharers of and

partakers in a larger life. We are only semi-civilised as yet ; and the worst is that we have become accustomed to it. We have too little imagination. We acquiesce in squalor, in vice, in wide-spread wretchedness—so long as we do not see it or endure it. We have no conception of what it must be to belong to a community of healthy and happy souls ; where each individual life is a rich asset for the whole, where national wealth is computed not in the millions of millionaires, but in the glorious sum-total of a common well-being. We have not touched yet the possibilities of human joy. We shall only reach it when our neighbour's joy, the joy of the whole community to which we belong, joins itself to ours, and so increases it a thousand fold.

XXIII

OF NAMES IN RELIGION

It would require more than a book, a whole library of books, to convey to us the full significance of names in religion. Its full elucidation demands not only a history, but a philosophy, and also a theology. One would have to investigate the reasons why a mere name, a few letters of the alphabet, should acquire such mystic power. What a history of fact would have to be gone into ; as to how certain names have acquired their significance, their merit or demerit. And what a history of human emotion ; of the terrors, the ecstasies, the loves, the hates, that have gathered round these names ! One side of the story is a sombre one. There has been no greater religious tyranny than that of names. There has been no greater hindrance to honest research, no more fatal barrier to spiritual unity, than the habit of labelling our neighbour. To label is so often to libel. It is so much easier than argument, and so much more deadly. What a business the word " heretic " has made in the world ; what a business of slaughterings and burnings, of hatreds and exclusions, of excommunication for this world and damnation in the next ! It is really a comfort to know that we are all heretics, and that these condemnations, if there is anything in them, are such as everyone of us shares. The present writer, years ago, in the course of a few

months, found himself in three widely separated places—in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London, in St. Peter's at Rome, and in the Mosque of St. Sophia in Constantinople. The doctrine of each of those three places meant a vigorous relegation of the other two to the penalties, known and unknown, of damnable heresy. Do what you would, you could not escape ; for you could not be Baptist, Romanist, and Mohammedan all at once. One must hope that the action here is something like that of polarised light, where rays meeting at a certain angle neutralise each other. Some day it will occur to people that you cannot shut off your neighbour without shutting off yourself ; that you cannot exclude him without being yourself excluded from him. The one accursed heresy is the erecting of a set of opinions into a wall which bars out from our love and sympathy all who disagree with us.

We are still terribly obsessed by names ; obsessed to an extent which will excite great wonder in our descendants. But over us they have no power comparable to that of former days. In early times a name was a force indeed. It was the great instrument of the exorcists. In Acts xix. we get an illustration of that at Ephesus, where, we are told, certain Jews practised their art on some possessed people, calling over them the name of Jesus. It is a curious sidelight upon one of the widest-spread customs of antiquity. We find it here in early Christianity, but it existed far beyond its borders. The Jewish Cabbala is full of mystical incantations, where words are stored with hidden magic. George Borrow, in his " Bible in Spain," recounts his meeting with a vagabond Jew at Lisbon. The man says :

"Our teachers are evil men, and live by fraud, like ourselves; yet still are they masters, men to be dreaded and obeyed. Have they not witchcraft at their command, and angels? Have they not words of power and the Shem Hamphorash?"

The Greeks were not behind in this word-business. With their "Askion, kataskion, aix or lix, tetrax and aision," their soothsayers professed to heal disease, and to command the powers of the air. There was a philosophy in this. A high-sounding word, oracularly uttered, especially where its meaning, if it had any, was unknown to the hearers, was for certain minds a first-class patent medicine. Did not "that blessed word Mesopotamia" contain healing virtue for the old woman who heard it? The *omne ignotum pro magnifico* method has in every age, including our own, been among the most successful doctors, both of the body and the soul.

The power of names in religion has been shown in other ways than these. A noteworthy one has been that of the borrowing of names. The early literature of religion was conducted in quite a different fashion from our own. An author nowadays puts his own name to his work. It is his property, and, if he be popular, is an income-producing property; also a fame-producing property. The early-world writers, especially where inspired by religious enthusiasm, had apparently very little of this ambition. The great point with them was to secure a hearing, an authority for their message. For this their own personality was not enough. They therefore called in the aid of some great name of the past. The moral question here did not seem even to have arisen; it was a common procedure which nobody questioned. We have, accordingly, in the

later Judæan and the early Christian period a whole pseudonymous literature, writings to which were prefixed the names of men who had nothing to do with their production. It was on this principle that the post-exilian scribes gave the name of Moses to masses of the Pentateuch of which they and not he were the editors ; that Daniel was given as the writer of a book which appeared two centuries after the Daniel period ; that David was accredited as the author of psalms he never wrote. Later, we have a swarm of Apocalyptic writings, such as the books of Enoch, the Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Assumption of Moses, and the like, where these great names are used to give weight to writings with which they had no historical connection. In the New Testament the same method is pursued. The first and the fourth Gospels carry names which modern criticism disavows as those of the authors. The Epistle to the Hebrews is now by nobody regarded as the work of St. Paul, and there are the gravest doubts as to his being the author of some other epistles bearing his name. Fortunately, their value for us and for Christian faith does not depend on their title. They carry in themselves the evidence of the Christian life and teaching of the time.

It is a noteworthy sign of the hold religion has had upon the world that so many of its names, both of persons and things, have had a directly religious signification. In the Old Testament almost every name is of that order. Our own language comes out very badly here. The Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin can express religion in a sonorous and dignified appellative which becomes only ridiculous when translated into our Anglo-Saxon. Theodore,

Adeodatus, Christophorus are entirely respectable as they stand. But "God-given Jenkins," or "Christ-bearer Jones," would excite a smile. The Puritans tried this nomenclature, with disastrous results. There is the story of a certain Barebones, whom his parents christened "He that believeth not shalt be damned Barebones." His contemporaries shortened the sentence into "D——d Barebones." Our English Bible is a glorious treasury; but its names, many of them at least, hardly fit the modern ear, and we do well to express our piety in other ways than by fixing them on our children. Then our place-names. If our world were only as pious as its names, we should be better than we are. Santa Cruz is, we fear, no holier to-day for being the City of the Holy Cross. The Santissima Trinidada, one of the leading vessels of the Spanish Armada, on its way to murder our English Elizabethans, derived, we fear, no great element of Christian charity from the fact that it bore on its prow the name of "The Most Holy Trinity." Do the booksellers of Paternoster Row, we wonder, conduct their business always under the sense that it is carried on in the street dedicated to "Our Father"? Is Philadelphia to-day the ideal city of "brotherly love"? Does St. Petersburg live up to its apostolic name? Well, at any rate, the names are there, and our world, bad as it is, is the better for them. They stand as testimonies to an ideal; as, amid all our secular follies, a witness to eternal things.

Religious names have often begun as nicknames, which afterwards, by the sheer merit of those who bore them, have been turned into titles of honour. The Quakers were so called as a term of obloquy, but

the community thus jeeringly designated has made the name one which the world now regards with a universal and singular respect. The term "Methodist" was given to Wesley's little band at Oxford in a similar mocking spirit. It was hurled at them by his Oxford contemporaries as a term of ridicule, being borrowed from the Methodisti, a sect of pagan Rome, who proposed to regulate their lives by a strict rule and line. It has more than survived that early ridicule. There is the story of an Eastern conqueror, who bore as his battle symbol a blacksmith's apron—in remembrance of the fact that his father was a blacksmith. But upon the homely leather the conqueror had embroidered rows and rows of precious stones, and so the symbol gleamed before his troops as something infinitely precious in itself, and as a memorial of glorious victories. To-day the title of the two communities we have named is their blacksmith's apron. Homely in itself, it flashes with jewels ; is bright with the splendid records of noble living and of mighty deeds.

We approach the deeps of our subject when we come to the Divine names. All religions, of course, have had these, and it is a debt we owe them to recognise all that they meant to the devotion of antiquity. The ancient divinities were very real and very awful to their worshippers. Whether their names were, in Pope's words, " Jehovah, Jove, or Lord," they meant to these early peoples all that the best in them suggested. Names which to us have become odious because of the practices with which their worship became associated, had originally a quite innocent and often a very lofty signification. " Baal " is to us a bad name, full of the flavour of

early heathenism. Yet originally it meant nothing more than the title of a proprietor, an owner, an employer. It was given in the Canaanite period to the property-owners, to the masters of servants. And the tribal divinity carried the title as owner-in-chief. The Greek *theos*, the Latin *deus*, are traceable to the Indian *Divas*, the god of the dawn. And the Jewish Jehovah, Jahwe of the Hebrew, in like manner has for its physical meaning " he who causes rain or lightning to fall on the earth." The name which later attained so august a meaning began as the title of a tribal divinity, one of the many gods of the rival peoples. It is worth noting here that it is to the divine names as they stand in the Hebrew Scriptures that we owe one of the greatest discoveries of modern Biblical science. The occurence of Elohim and Jahwe as two names of God in Genesis and later books gave to criticism a clue by which it has, throughout the Pentateuch and the historical books, been enabled to separate two distinct strands of narrative, the Elohistic and the Jehovistic, the work of separate authors, and belonging to different periods.

The Divine names, wherever we meet them, have always their story to tell. The Christian Churches have the word " Trinity," a term first used by Tertullian, at the end of the second century, as the summation, in one word, of their doctrine of God. But the doctrine was vastly older than Tertullian, or than Christianity itself. The Hindu theology has its trinity; and Professor Sayce, dealing with early Egyptian thought, says :

" The doctrines of emanation, of a trinity, wherein one God manifests himself in three persons; of absolute thought

as the underlying and permanent substance of things, all go back to the priestly philosophies of Egypt."

Since then we know how the same idea, in different forms, has figured in the neo-Platonic systems and in the philosophy of Hegel.

One name we have reserved to the last, the name which all Christians carry as their religious designation. How passing wonderful, how tremendous, the fortunes of that name! To the polite Roman world it first emerges in the one scornful sentence in which Tacitus, speaking of Christianity as an *exitiabilis superstitio*, "an abominable superstition," declares its author was "one Christus," who was put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate, and whose sect, repressed at the time, had broken out again throughout Judæa and in Rome itself. Tacitus was one of the greatest world historians. Could that calm and sagacious mind be restored for a moment to our own day; could he have seen his own imperial city crowned with St. Peter's and the Vatican; could he have glanced back through the intervening ages and discovered there what this "Christus," whose name he stabbed with a word and then dismissed, had stood for through those centuries; could he, beyond the Romanist boundaries, in some English or American Protestant gathering, have heard that name sung with passionate devotion as "the name high over all, in hell or earth or sky"; one wonders what his thoughts would be? He was the most fact-loving man of all the classical narrators, and here was a fact for him! If the miracles of the Gospels were recounted to him would he not be inclined to say that this present fact and this piece of history formed the greatest miracle of them all?

The story of the name, whatever we make of it, is indeed a wonderful one, and none the less so the more we investigate it. In the New Testament, written, for the most part of it, in the lifetime of Tacitus, Jesus is already known as the Logos, the First Born, the Son of God, the Mediator; known, we may say, by the highest titles which religious worship could give to an historical person. What do they mean as we find them there? We have always to remember that they were not invented by the writers. They used what they found; expressions which were current at the time. It is most noteworthy here that the exalted expressions we have just quoted are all to be seen in Philo Judæus—an Alexandrine Jew, and a contemporary of Christ—and used by him in expressing his doctrine of the Logos. To this non-Christian Jew the Logos also is God's first begotten Son, the image of God, an intercessor, a ransom, the bread of the soul. Max Müller holds that the Logos doctrine as given in Philo is found also in the early Indian philosophy. Do these facts modify in any way the view we must take as to the significance of these names as applied in the New Testament and in the Early Church to Jesus? We remember here Wernle's pregnant remark, at once so cautionary and so suggestive: "They (the primitive Christians) experienced something altogether abnormal in Jesus, but in order to express it their own words fail them. So they turn to the Jewish categories nearest at hand, and attempt to confine the indefinable within these limits."

We say finally here, "What if that language *was* borrowed?" The question is, Why did the early disciples feel compelled to borrow it, and to use it?

Call it, if you will, an old-world clothing of the mystery of Christ. Enough for us if behind it all we find the fact that concerns us; the fact that in Christ the disciples found the creator of a new blessed world in themselves, and that what they experienced of Him has become the experience of an ever-growing multitude of souls.

XXIV

THE IMPORTANCE OF THINGS

How do we know what *is* important? There are, indeed, suppositions about life which make nothing important, neither our bodies nor our souls; our morals nor our religion. If, for instance, what physical science says of our planetary system is all there is to tell, that our earth will go on cooling till it is frozen with the beings on it, and that this is the end of the business, what good would there be in our moral struggle, in our efforts at progress? Matthew Arnold, in one of his poems, asks:

> "But why not rather say,
> 'Hath man no second life? Pitch this one high!"

Yes, but would man do so? We doubt it. There is reason rather in what Renan preaches in the "Abbesse de Jouarre," and what Burke urges in one of his discourses, that the sense of ruin and despair loosens all the moral bonds. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." If, on the contrary, we are here on this visible scene developing a spiritual being which is to take its place in a spiritual universe, then the possible end of our world by frost, or by the crash of some wandering sun, would make no difference to our aspirations or our conduct.

The truth here would seem to be quite on the other side. It is that everything is important, and to a degree utterly beyond our ideas. We know

so imperfectly the meaning of what we are, or of what we are doing. The horse which jogs between the shafts has some notions probably about itself and its work. They are quite different from those of its driver. All the probabilities are that the things around us have a million meanings beyond what we attach to them. New ones, indeed, are continually unveiling themselves to our eyes. But there are infinite others that lie hidden. There are no really small things. The term applies to our range of vision. An atom, if we could see inside, would show as a world, nay, as a solar system. And what we call the small is linked always to the infinitely great. William III., who had passed safely through the innumerable dangers of the battlefield and the assassin's hand, met his death by the stumble of his horse over a tiny molehill. The event has been often moralised over. But was the molehill a small affair? Call it so if you please, but behind it and its work were the ages that went to the forming of its soil; the laws of motion and of gravitation which brought the rider to the ground; in fact, the whole structure of the world—all alike concerned in the bringing about of the event. It is so always. Everything that happens is a part of everything that is.

And this, which is the rule outside us, is, we find, the rule within us. All we do is always a part of all we are. We note often how the best things we do seem to be the result of accident. Mme. Curie discovered radium when she was looking for something else. A French scientist, M. Balard, thought that by passing chlorine gas through sea-water he would get iodine. What he actually discovered by his experiment was a new thing, bromine. Sir

The Importance of Things

Isaac Newton's apple, whose fall led to his researches on gravitation, has been the theme of endless comment. Stevenson's famous Jekyll and Hyde story came to him in a dream. But in all these cases the accidental and chance side is, we perceive, only on the surface. They do not happen by chance, or to "chance" people. What happened to Mme. Curie happened to a mind that was trained to observe, that was all intent on this particular line of things. And Newton's apple became famous because it was a Newton that witnessed its fall. It would have carried in it no gravitation theory to a yokel. And Stevenson's dream came to him after a long course of thinking on that problem of the two natures in man which formed the pivot of his story. Some of the greatest speeches have been improvisations. But Mirabeau, who was a master in that line, has an instructive note about them. Says he: "The first condition for successful improvisation is that you know your subject thoroughly." What you do, what you achieve at the moment, however accidental it may appear, is really the result of what you have been doing in all the previous moments of your life.

And this brings us to a good point of view from which to ascertain the relative importance of things. To the moralist and the religious teacher it is a matter of continual astonishment and reproach that men are so full of the importance of the unimportant, and so blind to the importance of the really important. And justly so. Yet there is something to be said on the other side. May it not be that the strangely different emphasis which different men put on things —this one on sport, that one on wealth, this other

on the interior life—are evidences of the richness and variety of the banquet which Nature spreads before her children? She has milk for her babes and meat for her strong men. She provides for all appetites. The man who has tasted of her best, and lives on that, must not despise the man whose stomach calls for humbler fare. For Nature does not despise him. And her charity should set the pattern to our own.

But this should not prevent us from seeking for her best. There are scales of the important, which the long history of man—above all, his spiritual history—has, with sufficient clearness, disclosed to us. When people call a thing important, the first question seems to be, important to what? Important to your appetite, or to your ease, or to your vanity? Or to the culture of the best in you, to your outfit as a servant of God and man? For this makes all the difference. Men judge their important by fits and starts, as the jumble of things within them make their separate appeal. When a passion, an appetite, rages in a man he will sacrifice everything to it. The world contains for him nothing else worth mentioning. Antony will give up an empire for a glance from Cleopatra. One is tempted to laugh and cry in the same breath at that apostrophe of Charles Lamb when urged to give up drinking: "Must I then leave you, gin, rum, brandy, aqua vitæ, pleasant, jolly fellows! D—n temperance, and him that first invented it—some anti-Noahite!" One could laugh and cry, we say, for Lamb was delightful even when he was drunk. But he, and ten thousand other hard-beset mortals with him, knew that the important here was not to accept the sway of these

" jolly fellows," but to put up the hardest fight of his soul against them.

For Nature, which, as we have said, is so generous to us, has laid down her law here, which none may, with impunity, contravene. She has expressed herself in our physiology. She has put our mind, our thinking part, at the top, while our appetites and our passions are housed lower down. When sense rules us we are turning ourselves upside down —an inversion essentially unnatural, and where, accordingly, nothing works right. Joubert was almost extreme in his spirituality, and yet is not this word of his the plain bottom fact of the matter? " To live is to think, and to feel one's soul. All the rest, eating, drinking, etc., are only the preparations for living, the means of supply." If that be so, one may measure the real importance of some of our modern pursuits. When, for instance, we see men spending their whole lives, straining all their faculties, in the accumulation of colossal fortunes, we may well ask, What does all this amount to as a real life-value? How far will this help a man to " think and feel his soul? " Which really is better, on a calculation even of mere enjoyment, for a man to have a richly-furnished house, or a richly-furnished mind? The one has a gaudy palace, the other has a wealthy universe; for it is ever the mind we carry to it that makes our world rich or poor. The entrance to its treasure chambers is not by a golden key; the " open sesame " here is to know and to feel.

The present mad race for wealth will end, one may hope, by convincing men of its utter futility. It is not the way to the best life. Even political economy, the science of wealth, is to-day proclaiming this.

Says Professor Marshall: "A moderate income, earned by moderate work, offers the best opportunity for the growth of those habits of body, mind and spirit in which alone is true happiness." That has ever been the conviction of the great souls. Emerson records of Wordsworth that "early in life he made his election between defending some legal rights, with the chances of wealth and a position in the world, and the inward promptings of his heavenly genius; he took his part; he accepted the call to be a poet, and sat down, far from cities, with coarse clothing and plain fare, to obey the heavenly vision." Can we doubt of his choice? Indeed, to prison oneself for life, as the mere money-hunter does, though the cell walls be of gold, is a poor affair. Says Diderot, in his "Neveu de Rameau," "Nay, it were better to turn the key of one's garret, drink cold water, eat dry bread, and seek one's true self." And we agree with him. One prefers even Thoreau's intoxication of liberty and of nature which led him to say, "If I should sell both my forenoons and my afternoons to Society, as most appear to do, I am sure that for me there would be nothing worth living for."

Plainly, to get the best out of ourselves, in the interest of our own highest life, and for the service of humanity, stands as the really important thing. And for that we shall make the most of each day. Yesterday is gone, to-morrow is not here, but in here and now are infinite possibilities. I shall not, for one thing, make the most of to-day unless I enjoy myself in it. And we can if we will. Is the day cloudy? Are circumstances adverse? But there are a thousand circumstances that are not adverse. We may repeat to ourselves that word of good Izaak

Walton : " Every misery that I miss is a new mercy, and therefore let us be thankful." Lamartine had a career full of strangest vicissitudes, but he could bear them easily ; for, as he said, " My soul is like the sieve in which the gold washers of Mexico collect the gold of the Cordilleras. The sand drops through, the gold in it remains." Why should you miss your day's happiness ? Why be like those people who, as Sydney Smith says, " run after felicity like an absent man hunting for his hat while all the time it is on his head, or in his hand ? " At the day's worst, can you not say, with Marcus Aurelius, " Can that which has befallen you possibly prevent you from being just, lofty, temperate ? Apply this principle —not the thing is a misfortune, but to bear it bravely is good fortune."

Time and ourselves, these are the important. We shall make them completely so by using them always on the important. So far as our time is our own we shall be continually asking ourselves, " Is this that I am doing really a helpful thing ? Is it making me wiser, stronger, more useful ? " It was said of Milton that all his vast reading was conducted with the single idea of fitting himself the better for the work to which he had consecrated himself. That is a good rule in reading. In times of mental weariness one may fall back and with thankfulness upon the lighter forms of literature. Mental relaxation is as needful as that of the body. But the mind's strength should be used upon the great themes. We are full to-day of questions of diet. But what the mind eats is not less important than what the body eats. The spiritual anæmia of to-day arises largely out of the literary fare with which it contents itself. You can

flourish on bread and water if meanwhile you keep company with the best minds. The early Church had much to say of guardian angels. Your guardian angels will be the great souls who have poured themselves out in the world's great books, and who, if you climb to their height, will refresh you with the breath of their mountain air.

But in the important things themselves there is always a scale. Their fine gold is offered to us in nuggets, and we have ourselves to smelt the ore and to make the assay. It is so with religion and the Church. No religion has come into the world as an absolute value. Christianity, whether we take it as given in the New Testament, or as offered by its teachers to-day, after nineteen centuries of history and tradition, is a raw material which each of us has to manipulate before he can use it. Amidst the medley of theories and of contradictory declarations as to how we should use it, what is to guide our choice? Matthew Arnold's account of Christianity, in his "Literature and Dogma," shocked the bishops not a little, as it was meant to do. And we by no means accept all the assumptions of that vivacious production. But in his proposition that "conduct is three parts of life," and that the whole emphasis of Christianity is not in Greek metaphysics, where the theologians have put it, but in its teachng and spirit about conduct, as exhibited in the Sermon on the Mount, and in "the secret of Jesus," we are entirely with him. That grand old Buddhist monarch, King Asoka, who lived a great many centuries before Matthew Arnold, had come to the same conclusions about religion and conduct. Says he: "Religion is an excellent thing. But what is religion?

Religion is the least possible evil, much good, piety, charity, veracity, and also purity of life." Have we in these later days bettered that definition? Had the theologians bettered it, who so defined religion as to lay themselves open to Gibbon's sneer, where, referring to Theodosius and the wrangles of his time, he observes, " Perhaps the Greeks would be still involved in the heresy of the Monophysites if the Emperor's horse had not stumbled ! " Has any Church or any individual ever derived inspiration for conduct out of those Greek-made Church controversies? The important of Christianity is not here. The important and the solely important is that which kindles us to love, to purity, to service.

The man whom Christ has captured, who has learned His secret, who through Him finds himself in wholesome relation to God and his fellows, will gain an ever surer judgment of the importance of things. It is a glorious secret for us all—for the philosopher, for the merchant in his affairs, for the housewife in her duties. Possessing it, we shall not readily be put out with trifles ; no, nor with things that are not trifles. We know what are the fundamentals by experiencing them. The heart that trusts, that prays, that loves, that serves, has got hold of life's best, and can never be robbed of its treasure.

XXV

THE RESPONSE

One of the wonders of our world lies in the richness and variety of its response. It is full of responses. You fire off a pistol in a mountain valley. Straightway the hills take up the note and hurl it back again in a myriad resounding echoes. You look into the clear depths of the lake and it gives you back your face. The sun in the springtime shines down upon our earth, and the response is in a vast upspringing life, in the glorious exuberance of leaf and flower. Every movement we make gets its answer. You push against the wall; it replies with resistance. You bend over the flower. It smiles back to you with its beauty; offers you the return of its fragrance. You question nature with your experiment; it is ready with its answer. All these seeming silent things are full of talk, striving to make themselves understood. We have here a magnificent companionship if only we can get on right terms with it. The answers are never at random; they go upon certain principles. It is so important for us to find out what those principles are, what law they obey.

There is a thing to be remembered here at the beginning, a thing that is vital to the whole matter. It is that the response depends everywhere, not only on the person or force that is acting, but also on the kind of material that is acted upon. We spoke of

the reflection you get from looking into water. But if your pool is muddy, or if the surface is agitated, the reflection will vary with that variation. The sun shines upon your garden, and the answer is in fruit and flowers. It shines upon the Sahara desert and gets for result the same sand, only hotter and drier. The echo for its extent and volume depends not only on your voice or pistol shot, but also on the form and quality of the reflecting surface. In fact, the world's responses everywhere are a test of the two things. We will see presently how this bears upon some questions of human nature, and of religion.

But meanwhile let us look closer at this matter of response, as we find it in nature, and in the system of things. Have we sufficiently appreciated, as a feature in the order and security of our life, nature's way of responding to us? She is the most honest of brokers; the most trustworthy tradesman we have to deal with. Her system is one of instant payment for what we offer. She foots her bill with an unfailing accuracy. She says to us: "You do this, and then I do that." And she does it, not by fits and starts; not with promptness to-day and carelessness to-morrow. She never forgets; she is always there. Properly handled, her elements are always ready with their service. There are here no strikes, no "down tools," no whims of disobedience. You can rely on her water to cleanse you; on her fire to warm you. You can build with her oaks, her granites, as they did a thousand years ago. Steam will expand and gunpowder explode to-morrow as they did yesterday. There are cheats enough in London, but gravitation will not cheat you. We sometimes exclaim

against the relentlessness of nature. We do not like gravitation when it breaks our bones at the bottom of a precipice. That is our pettishness. What sort of a world would it be if streams ran uphill one day and downhill another ; if the elements had no constancy in their action ? All our security, all our progress, depend on this sheer honesty with which nature fulfils her contract. If she cheated or sulked as we do there would be no living with her.

One of the most wonderful of her responses is that carried on every day in our own bodies. Here within us is an array of millions of servants, owning our sovereignty, waiting upon our will, and doing it in a way we do not in the least understand. What our will is in itself is beyond our analysis. We know it as an unseen force that works in a way quite incomprehensible. We will to act, and straightway our nerves, swift *aides de camp*, convey the message. Our muscles contract, our bones feel the pressure, a myriad complex movements are afoot, working into each other with perfect accuracy, and the thing we asked for is done. Our very thinking is done for us. We start the movement ; the rest is an affair of subordinates to whom we cannot give a name. They are workers who have answered to our call, but who do their work in their own way. What is it you do when you are studying some theme ? We speak of turning our attention to it ; but how small a part does our volition really play ! The real work here is what the physiologists call " unconscious cerebration " ; the unknown work of the unknown part of us. R. L. Stevenson gives his own vivid account of it. " Unconscious thought, there is the only method. Macerate your subject, let it boil slow ; then take

the lid off and look in—and there your stuff is, good or bad." Often enough the work is done in your sleep. You go to bed with a thesis all confused in your mind. It is an unexplored country, with no roads through the jungle. You wake up and the thing is clear before you; a well-defined country, with all the roads and by-paths plainly marked. Our thought process has been an evolution; the factors in which, and their way of working, are to you alike unknown.

In this great business of the world's response not the least noteworthy thing is the way in which nature keeps her answer waiting. There seems something almost pathetic in her attitude. Her elements are all there, with depths of unplumbed values in them, all asking for an interpreter. Such patience she has with the myriad bunglers who handle them without understanding. She yields them all they are equal to, all they are ready for. We imagine a savage standing before a grand piano. It is there, an affair of woods and ivories, and metal strings. Something to look at for one thing. He takes an impression of its size and shape. He strikes his two hands upon the keys and obtains a fine crash of sound. He grins with interest and pleasure. It is a wonderful sound-box, sure enough. The sound-box has yielded all it has to say to him. But there is a soul in it that waits. Surely there is a soul there that waits and longs; that longs for the artist who knows, who understands! Let him come, a Beethoven, a Liszt, and what an answer now leaps out! And this is what nature is doing, not in grand pianos only, but over the whole range of her vast empire. Do we imagine that we have won from her all her answers?

We are still only fumblers on the keys. She is slowly, patiently educating the mind in us that we may understand and interpret the mind in her. Steadily, as greatness and goodness come to us we shall discover the greatness, the goodness, that lie there, waiting for discovery. Who shall say if heaven itself may not consist in a perfectly mastered earth? If what is here and now, when we see into all its meaning, may not contain all the fulness, the bliss of being? Are these things of space, of our being here or there? Are they not rather of the spirit that masters space and transcends it?

Nature, we say, is educating the man in order that he may reach the answers yet hidden within herself. And note that a large part of that education consists in the mishaps and catastrophes which the strict honesty of her laws now and again brings upon him. We are not in a dame school, but at a university—one where the curriculum is of the widest and of the hardest. The difficulties, failures, disasters of life are the compliment nature pays us. She puts us up against the most tremendous fates because of her belief in the stuff we are made of; stuff that is to come out victorious in the long battle; that is to learn all the lessons; that endures catastrophe in order that eventually it may conquer catastrophe. And that the training is a good one is shown by the results of it. Man thrives on his difficulties. He wins new secrets from them; his heart glows at the mightiness of the task before him. Baptised by this mother of his into danger and death, he sees into her hope concerning him; into the destiny she predicts for him. So hard a training—for so great a future!

Thus far on nature's response to man. Let us

now to man's response to man, to his fellow. Here lie all the questions of conduct, one may say all the lessons of religion. We said at the beginning that a response depends not merely on what is brought, but quite as much on the quality of the thing it is brought to. It is as much the reflecting surface as the voice that produces the echo. How, in this view, does human nature show, as to its inherent quality? Is it good or bad? Is it compounded mainly of original sin; or is it a thing we can trust to and build upon? We find no original sin in elms and oaks; the laws of nature are honest dealers, that return full measure for all we bring them. Is man the one exception? Let us make our theology here out of the facts. The facts are that man is an echo of all you bring to him. If you offer him hate he will return it. You want a fight; he can meet you there. You bring him your lowest; you will find in him a lowest that will perhaps beat you at the game. He carries in him all his old ancestry; all the barbarism, the cunning, the fierceness of it. Is that all? If it were, his history would be what we call "natural history," as that of bears and snakes.

What has made him human has been his faculty of response to some other things. Take him where you will, in savage tribes, in slums, in his scenes of utmost degradation, and you will find there in him this wonderful thing—his response to the highest. Bring him truth, bring him justice, or kindness, or even your need and helplessness, and you get a reply in kind. Travellers over the wild places of the earth are unanimous about the human friendliness. You go amongst the Lapps, the Esquimaux of the frozen North, or amongst Central African savages—English

women have gone there, without arms, without protection—and the answer to their need has been the answer of friends. Or you come with strength, but offering justice and truth: the savage knows their meaning, acknowledges their power. William Penn made treaties with the American Indians. He kept his side, they kept theirs. John Woolman carried his Gospel of peace to a tribe actually on the war-path. They met him with reverence and courtesy. Speak out of your friendliness, out of your purity, out of your love. Every soul finds somewhere in its depths an echo to that note.

It is here we recognise the amazing optimism of Christ's Gospel, and see the ground of it. Christianity, on one side of it, deals severely with man. It tells him the hardest truths about himself. It does not mince matters with his sins. All the same, Christ's message in its wholeness is assuredly the greatest compliment that has ever been paid to human nature. Says Edward Caird with entire truth: "It is a significant fact that no one has ever brought the accusation of being an easy optimist against the greatest optimist the world has ever seen." No; not an easy optimist; an optimist of hard fact. Jesus would have been a madman had He addressed such an appeal as His to a nature capable of anything less than the highest things. Through all the barbarisms, the animal coatings, the hide-bound prejudices encrusting it, He sends His voice straight to the quivering soul behind, assured of the response. He believed in the soul. He believed, as Tertullian—who also was no easy optimist—puts it: "Whenever the soul comes to itself, as out of a sleep, as out of a surfeit, or a sickness, and attains some-

thing of its natural soundness, it speaks of God." He addresses it as capable of everything; of all renunciations, sacrifices, heroisms. He demands from it more than the human—the superhuman; demands that it shall go beyond itself, and this because it can be linked to a more than itself; that it can be linked with the nature of God and become divine. To that appeal what has been the response? All that is in man has responded. First, the cruelty which crucified; the incredulity which denied; the faintheartedness which compromised. But the appeal still rings on, with all its boldness, its incredible demand. And the soul responds; is building itself on that final Word; is building itself into a new humanity, which that greater age which is coming has yet to show.

Christ's optimism, we say, was grounded on the nature of the soul, and of the response to it of that spiritual world to which the soul belongs. We have seen how nature yields her answer to the questions we put to her; how stone and timber answer us; how the laws of things answer us. But the Christian life asks other questions; makes other appeals. It pushes up tendrils that thrive in a different air. It forms itself upon faith, upon aspiration; it utters the language of prayer. Does it get any response here? It is odd the way people have dealt with this question; the sort of difficulties they raise. They seem to think that because a man prays for a hundred pounds and does not get it, or asks for the life of his dying child and gets death for a reply, that there you have proof of the non-efficacy of prayer. As if the question lay there at all; as if the non-operation of prayer in one sphere meant its non-operation in

any other! Prayer is the soul's affair, and it is with the soul it deals. And that without fail. There is always the answer. Observe what the answer is. Sir Walter Scott, in that finest of all novels, "The Heart of Midlothian," puts one side of it. Says he:

> "Without entering into an abstruse point of divinity, one thing is plain—namely, that the person who lays open his doubts and distresses in prayer, with feeling and sincerity, must necessarily in the act of doing so purify his mind from the dross of worldly passion and interest, and bring it into that state when the resolutions adopted are likely to be selected rather from a sense of duty than from any inferior motive."

That is much, but is it all? Far from it. That is the outspring of the mind, but prayer of the true sort has ever an inflow as well as this outflow. It is as when the vessel nearing land flings its rope and finds that it holds. In prayer we know ourselves in contact with a higher realm of things, and our rope holds. Our answer is the thing we want, the best thing there is. Not words; for what are they? Not words, but what is so much better, the inflowing of peace, a sense of security, the feeling of a near Presence, often an ineffable happiness. Are there better things in this or any world than these? Is there any heaven surpassing in its sheer blessedness that which John Masefield in "The Everlasting Mercy" has described as flashing into a humble, seeking soul—

> "I knew that Christ had given me birth
> To brother all the souls on earth,
> And every bird and every beast
> Should have the crumbs broke at the feast!"

Prayer, we say, is the soul's contact with the realm

to which it belongs. Throw your cable across to it and you find that it holds. Throw your bridge across to it, and the treasures, the society, of that realm will begin to pour in. Nature, we have seen, in all her departments is full of answers, most of which we have not yet learned to decipher. But our highest nature, as it throws out its signals to the silent air—that, too, is answered back. The notes that come to us, faint and far off though they may seem, are from the realm of the real. Nature, so honest with us in all our lower questionings, will not turn traitor to us in this last and highest. The range of things through which she leads us are the outer courts of a temple. Her final secret is God.

XXVI

ON DOING THINGS

We are all doing things; but have we ever tried, with any thoroughness, to penetrate into the meaning of our doing? "In the beginning was the Word; in the beginning was the Thought; in the beginning was the Deed," says Goethe, leaving us to ponder the riddle of that threefold alternative. Doubtless these all lay in the beginning; were concerned in it. How they were related in that primal start we may perhaps never know. It is the cosmic secret, and we shall not here concern ourselves with it. What we want is to trace, as far as we can, the significance of that third beginner; the meaning to us of doing, of action. Questions arise, vastly important questions, as to what it counts for in the philosophy of life, in the framing of character, in the creation of belief, in the whole business of morality and religion. We are getting some new light on these subjects. We have hitherto been so busy that we have hardly had time to think about our busy-ness. But we are thinking about it now, and in a way which is likely to produce some considerable changes, both of theory and practice, in the questions we have mentioned.

Says Fichte, in the "Bestimmung des Menschen," or "Vocation of Man," that noble product of one of the noblest minds:

On Doing Things

"Not merely to know, but according to thy knowledge to *do*, is thy vocation; not for idle contemplation of thyself; not for nursing devout sensations; no, for action art thou here; thine action, and thine action alone, determines thy worth."

That is a saying which is easily assailable. Might we not say, in the Latin phrase, *operari sequitur esse*: "doing follows being, is according to being." Should we not, therefore, seek for quality of being before we talk of doing? To which the answer is, that it is only by doing that we get to being; only in action do we reach our true selves. That, to begin with, is evidently the way in which eternal being has sought to realise itself. We could imagine the Divine thought as resting in an eternal contemplation of itself. Or we can imagine it as pondering eternally over the choice between all the possible modes of action. We can imagine it even as so conscious of the perils of action as to determine not to act. That has not been its way. We find ourselves in a universe where the decisions have been taken, where the greatest things have been done. Philosophers have amused themselves by imagining systems which would have been so vast an improvement on the one that exists. But doubtless all the possible ones had been considered before the advent of our philosophers. The fact, the wonderful fact, is that, out of them all, one has been chosen; this one in which we are. The adverse possibilities were all dared, and the thing started on these lines. The great Beginner sets the example to all other beginners by doing something; by daring something; by doing and daring *this!* May we not say that it was only by doing and daring that He could realise Himself?

It is an aside from the argument we want here to

pursue, but may we not pause a moment to contemplate the scale on which this doing has been accomplished? We are full to-day of our machineries, our manufactures, our inventions, our discoveries. But what is all this activity of ours compared with that other activity we come into, an activity which has been going on with clockwork regularity through countless millions of years? We build ships that rush the seas at thirty knots an hour. What of this world-ship we are all sailing in, that ploughs with unerring movement the depths of space, whose endless cycle gives us our seasons and measures for us the years of our life? Talk of speed; talk of horse-power! Add together the forces of all our enginery, and compared with this enginery they are as the flick of a finger; they do not affect its movement by a hairsbreadth. What a noise we make with our fevered industries! The planet which carries them all moves without a sound. Man's forces are noisy because they are so puny. The world movement, which contains them as a grain of sand on its surface, knows the secret of perfect silence. And yet this stupendous planetary machine, so immeasurably old, so enduringly young, so stupendous in its silent power, is but a speck in a solar system which is itself but a speck in the infinite universe of worlds. The doing here has been on a royal scale.

But let us get closer home. Our main concern here is with ourselves, and we want now to show how it is by action, and action alone, that we can get our proper bearings in life; that thus only can we reach truth and goodness. We say truth for one thing; for it is only by doing that we can touch truth. Were we to content ourselves with thinking,

with mere speculation, we should find ourselves speedily in a universal scepticism. How, for instance, do we know there is an outside world? When you say you see things, or hear things, or touch them, is not all that you have here a certain modification of your own consciousness? What relation have these sensations of sight, sound, touch, to the things in themselves? And what reality is there in your own consciousness? May it not be a mere dream? How can you be sure that it contains in itself the fact of things? Does not your intellect play all manners of tricks with you? Did not Zeno, in an argument to which none of his contemporaries could find an answer, prove the impossibility of motion? And, in the same way in which, by mere thinking, you can reduce the outer world into a mere affair of your own sensations, you can destroy the fabric of all morality. Has not everything been determined beforehand? Is not your nature, with all its desires and impulses, an affair of pre-existing conditions; of your physical and moral ancestry, of the play upon you of outside forces beyond your control? Are not all these forces, those around you, and those behind, of the past, part of a system of iron causation, in which every link is bound to all other links, all of which in their place and quality have been determined by an invincible necessity? Why, then, talk of being good or bad? Are not you a part of nature which, indifferently, makes here a toad and there a lion, and by the same law makes here a great man and there an ignoble one? If there is any blame here must we not put it on nature and not on ourselves?

What is the deliverance from all this tangle? It

is always and everywhere by action that we free ourselves. It was by walking about that Zeno's contemporaries made sure that his argument, that the hare and tortoise argument, had a fallacy in it somewhere. Bergson, better than any later thinker, has supplied the intellectual refutation, but it was action, first and all along, that has made men believe in motion. We find our outside world in the same way ; by acting always as if it were there, assuming that it is what it professes to be ; and by finding our action always justified by results. And in the moral sphere it is the same. We act here as though we were morally free agents, able to choose between good and evil, and we find that the moral system responds to our action. It justifies our faith. The moral struggle assures us that we are not machines, but free agents, creating our character by a moral volition. By doing, we reach the conviction of a world above nature, a world of the inner life, whose laws are other than those of force and necessity—above them, using them for its higher ends. In our contact with the visible world, as in our contact with the invisible, we live by faith. For action is simply faith in operation. It were impossible except for a belief in the truth of things ; and it is rewarded by the response which all things, visible and invisible, make to it. "*So lange man strebt, glaubt man ; und so lange man glaubt, strebt man.*" "So long as we strive we believe, and so long as we believe we strive." It is, in fact, in doing things that we create ourselves. Action is the proof, the declaration of our freedom. By it we bring into being something that was never in the world before—our character, our personality. And when, in the exercise of our

free volition, in obedience to the inner call of the spirit, we go on choosing the good, we find in the act itself the assurance of a foothold in a higher realm, a possession there, from which no reasoning can shake us, for it is rooted in the deeps of consciousness. We know ourselves as of a kingdom of the Unseen, whose laws are above those of matter, and whose possessions are secure from all material assault.

Doing things is the ground plan of evolution, and it is also the ground plan of all sane religion. The saying of Coleridge, "All things strive to ascend and ascend by their striving," contains the whole scheme of creation so far as we can see it. In every living thing, in vegetable, in animal, in man himself, there is a principle of movement, an instinct after the more, an instinct which is the pledge of eternal progress. And here note that as in the lower creation, so pre-eminently in man, the movement comes, not from the outside, but ever from within. In the neglecting or evading that fact, we find some of the most fatal mistakes in morality and religion. There is here all the difference in the world between doing a thing yourself and having something done for you by someone else. There is no greater immorality in the world than a doctrine which tells a man his whole salvation is secured by just believing in the work, the sacrifice of another. That is a theological salvation from a theological condemnation—a salvation of theory rather than of fact. Salvation! From what, pray? From God's wrath? But it is not God's wrath but His love that sent Christ into the world. Jesus said to the adulterous woman, "Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more." Is not

that the Divine attitude ? Where is the wrath there ? He has nothing to say to this woman's past, bad though it were, except to be done with it, and to begin again. Your salvation is truly of God ; but of Him through yourself ; from your lower self into a higher one. And this ever by your own act ; by the act of faith which appropriates God's grace ; by the free acceptance of His holy will ; by the energy of obedience to His inward call. "This do and thou shalt live," is religion's first and final word.

It is with these principles to guide us that we are beginning at last to discern between the true and false methods of education. We are spending millions annually, and uncountable hours of educational time, in filling our children's brains with things that have no relation to their actual life. This is true both of our public and our common schools. Our very amusements to-day consist more in watching other people, professional people, do things, instead of doing them ourselves. Real education consists in training people to action, to the action which will make them experts in their own life struggle ; it is to bring them into actual contact with reality, and show them how to deal with it. And this training never comes by reading about things, by watching other people do them. Botany is not in the books, but in the flowers ; mechanics are not in theorems but the handling of tools. The education of the labourer should be, above all things, an education for his work ; and of the labourer's sister a training for her work. Our present system is one apparently for making our boys and girls into clerks and typewriters.

One of the worst results of it all is to fill their minds with the idea that book knowledge is higher than fact knowledge, that to spell words is better than to handle things. By all means let our young people have literature, if they want it. But surely the first thing for them is to make them effective for life's battle, to make the school the starting point for the perfect craftsman, for the perfect housewife. It should be the place also where the idea should be instilled—an idea which will destroy our present snobbery—that efficiency in labour is the first certificate of character and standing ; that to know how to do things ourselves is so infinitely better than a rote-acquired knowledge of how other people have done them. We all of us need a better education here. Ought a man to marry until he knows how, if occasion arises, to run the household himself, to nurse his wife and to work for her, if need be ? Education of the true sort is nothing more nor less than the training of us, by actual experience, to be expert helpers over the widest area of service.

It is by doing things that life's most difficult problems are solved. The beneficence of the world order is nowhere more effectively displayed than in the number of things it offers us to do. Your depression, your black melancholy, lasts as long as you sit idle, contemplating your woe. Shall you ever get over the grief of this bereavement, this loss of your dearest interest ? But your work claims you, and its call, you find, is your salvation. As, at its command, you put forth your energy, the blood begins to flow again in your veins, your soul lives once more, your bruised heart finds its

easement. This blessedness of doing! It is the magician's wand which turns the dreariest desert into a garden. The late William James, in one of his essays, describes his experiences during and after the earthquake at San Francisco. He was in the neighbourhood at the time, and on the spot immediately after the event. What astounded him most, he says, was the cheerfulness, the positive high spirits of the ruined populace. Everyone had lost something, many of them their all. But then—everything was to be done, and the doing of it seemed not only to have absorbed their energies, but to have filled them with a new content. There they were; with a huge gap in their fortunes; but then they had their bodies and their brains, and everything to do! The gap, what was it but a glorious call to show the stuff they were made of? What happened there is happening everywhere. Were every city in the world reduced to ashes to-morrow our race would be little the poorer; its sum of happiness barely decreased. It would go to work again, joyous in the business of making better cities than the old ones.

Let us hail man as the maker, the doer. There lies his pre-eminence, and also his glorious liberty. All that is around and behind, so much of which cramps and confines us—our laws, our institutions, our moralities, our theologies, are, be it ever remembered, man's work, and what man has made he can unmake and remake. The old dogmatic systems, which for long ages have had their iron hand upon us—what of them? They are all a human affair; and we are human, as good as these old makers, perhaps better. What they had of truth in them

we will take ; but they shall tyrannise over us not for an hour. Our systems shall be not theirs, but ours, such as shall fit our wider knowledge and not their narrower one. Most of all, in making things we are making ourselves. The deeds we do, in obedience to the higher, the spiritual law, are forces projected into that unseen world to which our spirits belong. They may seem a failure here, but they are a success there. When we follow them into that unseen we shall find them again ; find them and ourselves again, as part of a diviner order, an endless destiny.

XXVII

OUR OWN CONTRIBUTION

The question we here propose—to ourselves first and then to all and sundry who read these lines—is, What are we giving to the world; what is our debtor and creditor account with it; what return are we making for our board and lodging in it; for all the care and trouble that have been expended on us during our long occupancy? There are people to whom this will be a new suggestion; a question so new as to be almost impertinent; at any rate, somewhat disturbing. For the main preoccupation of most of us seems to lie in so entirely opposite a direction. The world, in all sections of it, appears full of one idea—the idea of getting, of what can be got. We are all contending for our rights, our privileges; are furious at the people who stand in the way of them; at the more fortunate ones who have jumped our claim. In the newspapers you hear on one side the wail of the comfortable classes—the *beati possidentes*—at the unheard-of demands of the proletariat. You hear their denunciations of the British working man; his never-ending demand for more wages, for shorter hours; his strikes, his threats of social revolution. And in the labour journals you see what the said working man thinks of the capitalist.

Well, if the working man is exigeant, we need not

go far to discover where he has learned that lesson. At worst he is only an imitator, and that at a far distance, of the classes above him. English history, to keep to that, has been, so far, the story of the enormous appetite of its governing people ; of the incredible diligence of those who possess, in getting more. Disraeli, in "Coningsby," represents the younger sons of the aristocracy as one and all persuaded that the salvation of the country depended on their securing Government posts of not less than twelve hundred a year. If only they had been satisfied with twelve hundred a year ! Take any back period of our Church and State ; the picture is always the same. It is that of the people who work and of the well-placed who rob them of the proceeds. It is almost laughable. The English Reformation—what was it ? There were other big things in it, but largely it was the plunder of the Church by the great nobles. Their descendants to-day are rich on that transaction. And the top people were best at the game. Do we know that story ; of Henry VIII., of Somerset, of Elizabeth ? How they kept bishoprics, deaneries and other Church offices vacant for years, while they appropriated the revenues ? And the Scottish Reformation ! Good John Knox wanted the money taken from the old Church for the establishment of schools and colleges ; and Scottish nobles saw to that. The indomitable man squeezed a little for his purpose, to Scotland's everlasting advantage. But seven-eighths of it went into the capacious pockets of Scotland's earls and barons.

The merry game has been going on ever since, and with the Church itself often as leader. That religion has lived at all, in spite of the Church, is the astonish-

ing thing. What glorious traditions those of the second Charles, when Crewe, Bishop of Durham, gains his preferment by a payment of five thousand pounds to Nell Gwynn, the King's mistress; of the Georgian era, when the highest offices were bought and sold; when the Pretymans, the Sparkes, the Suttons made enormous fortunes out of their endless sinecure benefices! In the matter of sinecures, lay and clerical, we have the dictum, so characteristic of the time, of Lord Ellenborough. He said:

"A reduction of salary must proceed on the ground of the diminution of duty. As in the matter under discussion—the chief clerkship of the King's Bench, which was held by his son, with emoluments of twelve thousand a year—nothing had ever been done, it was impossible that less could be done in it in future."

The argument, you see, was that the sinecurist had never done anything for his money, and he could not be expected to do less than that! And there was Lord Thurlow's nephew, a clergyman, who held the offices of patentee for the execution of bankruptcy laws, of clerk of transfers in Chancery, of prothonotary of the Court of Chancery, all sinecures, with no duties, and yielding an income of eleven thousand a year!

Those were the glorious times, too, when the common lands of England to the extent of millions of acres, were stolen from the people, their lawful possessors, by the infamous Enclosure Acts; lands which to-day, duly fenced, protected by gamekeepers and trespass boards, are the jealously-guarded property of the descendants of the spoilers. And to-day, everywhere, the top dog shows no diminution of appetite. In this matter republican America

comes no whit behind aristocratic England. In fact, the younger nation has beaten the older one at the game. The modern trust is America's achievement. The present writer was dining once with a citizen from the States. "Trusts," said he, as the talk turned on that topic, "why, sir, in our State we have a cemetery trust and a coffin trust. Things, in fact, have come to such a pass in that line that a poor man has just to go on living because he can't afford to die!" We repeat, the working man when, like Oliver Twist, he "asks for more," has a great example before him. As he contemplates that example, in its magnificent voracity, he may well be astonished at his own moderation.

And yet all this time the world has had another example for its consideration. In Christianity—we mean the Christianity of its Founder—it has had, through all these ages of greed, the remarkable proposition before it that the real business of life, the prime source of life's greatness and happiness, is, after all, not that of getting so much as that of giving. In the career which is offered us in the Gospels, we have the singular spectacle of a being endowed with powers equal to any conquest the world could offer to ambition, yet using these powers not for riches, nor place, nor splendour; not for any getting at all of this sort; using them instead purely for giving; the giving of great teaching, of a ceaseless outflow of compassion and of ministering; of care for the sick, the helpless, the disinherited; until the Giver ends by giving Himself in an act of sheer sacrificial suffering, on the cross of pain and death. And His proposition is that this, and not the other, is the true sort of life for you and for me.

One might suppose, judging from the examples we have been citing, that the proposition thus laid before the world had been, after examination, decisively rejected by it. Not so. On the contrary, it has been decisively accepted. Where, you ask? Not certainly in the region of man's greed, of his inferior animal instincts. But, and this is the whole point, the soul of man, the prophetic part of him, that spiritual element which, as yet in its beginning, is the forecast of all he is yet to be, this, from the first has recognised Christ's way as the true, the only one. And the proof of this is in the universal verdict of the human conscience. Has it occurred to you that while the mere selfish getter, the servant of ambition, receives all manner of flatteries while living, he is never canonised when dead? Language here is a faithful recorder. By no possible twist of it can you make it say that greed is holy; that self-interest is sacred. Man does not build his altars there, nor offer there the heart's worship. Someone has asked whether human life is not, after all, a country for values? It is, and the soul everywhere appraises values finally in the scale only of giving, of loving, of serving.

We come back here, then, to the topic of our own contribution. Giving, for us as for Christ, is the way to the blessed life. And assuredly we owe something. But what have we to offer? With multitudes of us there seems so little. We have not genius, nor position, nor wealth, nor even health. We are irked incessantly by our limitations. "Man is galled by his confines; never at ease with his soul." We are perhaps slaves of the counter or the workshop; we are tied to small, wearisome, domestic duties

—to be done, and then everlastingly to be done again. How poor it all seems, how futile, this narrowing drudgery, this unlovely task! We would fain be doing a thousand brilliant things; and instead we are shut up, perhaps, to an invalid chamber, to the mere enduring of pain! We are not of the creation that exults in its powers, but of the creation that groaneth and travaileth. That there is so much of this in the world is being made just now by many, as it has been made often before, a ground of atheism, of protest against the whole scheme of things. Talk of contributions! Who has made us any contributions? Why has not nature, so prodigal in her largesses elsewhere, been a little more liberal towards ourselves? But here comes in the most wonderful part of Christ's message to us. Should not all sufferers note this, that the greatest contribution which He made to the wealth of the world was just the contribution of His suffering? What is He doing there on the cross? Doing just nothing; no teaching of the multitude, no healing of the sick, no mountain sermons. He is just hanging there, bound and helpless; not the doer, only the sufferer. And yet it is precisely there and then, precisely in this way that He is accomplishing His greatest, Divinest work. Just there and then is the thing being done which has gone deepest into the heart of the world; that has wrought most mightily for its redemption. Here, in mere suffering, is something being wrought which has built churches all over the world; which has stirred painting and poetry and architecture to their most inspired efforts; which has set men and women to work in hospitals, in slums, on mission fields, stirred with the passion of holy love.

What does this mean? It seems to open a new view of suffering; assuredly not the atheistic view. We are in a universe, remember, where, science tells us, nothing is lost, nothing is wasted. Every atom of it is immortal; changing endlessly in form, but never ceasing in its working, in its fruitions. And if that is true of atoms, do you think that it is less true of souls? If that volt of electric power is never to be lost out of the great scheme, is it likely that the throb of your soul, the pain throb, may be, is of no account? If Christ's suffering wrought all we see, is *your* suffering, think you, less sure of its end? The truth is, the whole travail of humanity, its sum of pains and woes, is immeasurably the richest, the most productive of its seed-sowing. The weaknesses, the limitations that we mourn; the narrowness of our lot, the inexplicable sorrows which have been our fate, are the treasure in us that will yield the highest interest. This is the teaching of the cross. It is the teaching of science, of history.

But there is a contribution which is apart from suffering; and we are to look to it that it is worthy. We are here to act as well as to endure. But to do something we have first to be something. *Operari sequitur esse:* "doing follows being, is according to being." "My only desire," said Taine at twenty-one, "is to improve myself, in order to be worth a little more every day." If only our twenty-oners would more generally follow that example! It is astonishing when one thinks of it, in how slovenly a manner people keep their accounts with life. In business, in the professions, we put a very strict value on our time. We sell it at the highest price obtainable. The specialist gives you a quarter of an hour, and

you put down his two guineas. A barrister makes a little speech in court, and the fee is marked on his brief. That is business—and good business. But what of the business with yourself; have you any sort of account there? Is the dealing there on the same lines as with your client? You, too, are a country for values, and so huge, so profitable a commerce is possible in it. What sort of returns are you working for? The doctor takes two guineas for his fifteen minutes. Nature leases out to you so many fifteen minutes! Are they yielding to you anything in that proportion? The world, we say, is full of reckless traffickers with life. William Law, in his "Serious Call," sketches one of them. "If," he says, "Flavia lives thirty years in this way, she will have spent fifteen in bed, and fourteen in eating, drinking, dressing and visiting, reading plays and romances and going to the theatre." Flavia has such a multitude of imitators in our day, who will wake up at the end to find how poor an affair their career has been.

Let us remember always, however, that for a worthy contribution to life, the discipline of the heart is more even than that of the brain. And that is a discipline of which we can all partake. You may take no place in the ranks of learning or of science; none can prevent you entering the lists of love and of service. The learning may in the end prove out of date; love never grows old, never misses its aim. The soul that is fired with faith and hope carries everywhere its instant benediction. It shines in the countenance and radiates health by a glorious contagion. It is like the Alps. The Alps do not know you, never heard your name. But just

because they are Alps—their snowy summits catching the sunlight, their glorious air charged with force; their immortal beauty shining in upon the soul—just by being that, what a boon are they, all unknowing, to the fever-worn travellers who look upon them! Oh, for more Alpine souls! The soul never grows for itself; it grows that others may climb on it to the heights. It gives all it receives—gives without knowing it is giving. Yes, we are here to give, and to taste its blessedness. Our contribution may seem of the poorest, but the universe would not be complete without it. No one else can offer it. The Spirit of Holiness, striving in His eternal struggle to shape this rude world into a kingdom of light, looks for our co-operation, for our contribution. Shall we offer aught less than our best?

XXVIII

THE HUMAN NOTE

When spring comes we are on the watch for new arrivals. The air becomes vocal. We distinguish one after another the notes of this and that songster who comes to swell the chorus. It would take the ear of a Jefferies to detect them all, but the veriest townsman knows the lark, the thrush, the blackbird, the cuckoo, the nightingale, as they take their places in the yearly concert. There is no mistaking their note; they keep to it with so singular a fidelity. They differ widely in their range of variation, but it is a limited range. It is always the old tune; they do not invent new ones.

The voice of the birds is always delightful, but there is another which surpasses it. The master-note on this earth is the human note. There is nothing in nature's organ comparable to its *vox humana.* Here is a range without limit; a depth, a delicacy, a fulness that we find nowhere else. For man's voice is the match of his spirit. *On a toujours la voix de son esprit.* A perfect voice would be more than an affair of vocal organs. It would require at the back of it a perfect soul. It would be a man's soul vibrating; giving out all the greatness, the mystery, the joy, the suffering, the tragedy and victory of human life. When the human note began who shall say? We figure to ourselves its origin; the

movement of it from the discordant cry of the forest habitat, through its upward stages of articulate expression, to the full expansion of its present range. And new elements are continually coming into it. For the human note is far more than a mere voice-expression. What we here mean by it is all that belongs to humanity, the whole content of its soul. The study is much more than a musical one ; unless, indeed, we take all life as music. What we want here to point out is the significance and the preciousness of the purely human ; the weakness, the disaster, which, in various directions, come from failing to recognise it ; the danger of the falsetto, of the half tones, the dissonances which we so often hear in place of the full human note. Half our difficulties in religion, half our social disorders, come from the fact that the Church on the one side and the world on the other fail to recognise some part of the entire humanity of man ; fail in their music ; give out ground tones and leave out the top notes; offer at times mechanical wheezes instead of the soul's full compass.

Pope was perhaps the most artificial of our poets, but he struck the centre in his saying, "The proper study of mankind is man." We can get up no real interest in anything outside him. Our world begins to charm us when we have made it human. It is the poet, the romancist, who creates scenery. The Scottish hills and moorlands were as beautiful a thousand years ago as they are to-day. But it was when Scott threw over them the magic of his genius, made them alive with poetry and passion, that the world sought them. Cornwall is a new country to us since Tennyson wove into its rugged coasts, its

desolate wilds, the mystic legends of Arthur and his knights. When New Zealand produces its Ossian or its Wordsworth, it will have recreated its mountains. Lamb was a born Cockney, and it seemed to his friends a rank heresy when he declared that it was the company he met there that reconciled him to the Lake country; that he would not be satisfied "but for the human faces without which the finest scenery failed to satisfy his sense of beauty." Yet he was saying what is felt by us all.

It is the human touch, the thing that reaches our common humanity, that holds men when nothing else will. Who except a few theologians now reads Basil? How few have studied those learned disquisitions of his which you find in the three volumes of the Benedictine edition! But how closely we are touched when, in one of his letters, he writes: "I have been fifty days ill, hardly able to turn in bed; quite crushed with pain. I am trying all this month the hot-water cure." Here is a brother sufferer whose heart-beat we feel across fifteen centuries! Bunyan's theological tenets, as expounded in the divinity of the period, lie dusty and unread on forgotten bookshelves. But the world has devoured his "Pilgrim's Progress." How many people know Newman's "Arians," or his translation of Athanasius? But millions know his "Lead, kindly light," that exquisite lay of human hopes and fears.

There are times when the official mouthpiece of humanity fails to produce its true authentic note. Then it goes ill with the mouthpiece and ill with the world. There have been many such times in history, and their record is instructive. Take, for instance, the mediæval age and what followed it. The voice

of the Church in that time had become a mournful dirge, a threnody. Life was represented as a vale of tears, humanity as under a curse, with the dreadful judge at the door. *Dies iræ, dies illa, sæclum solvet in favilla*—" the day of wrath, that dreadful day, when heaven and earth shall melt away "—that was the note that tolled dismally from steeple and from pulpit. Instinctively the human heart revolted against a presentation of things that was not true to itself. And so came the outburst of the Renaissance, the *rire énorme* of Rabelais, the " fleshly school " of Belgian and Flemish art, the licence, the incredible vices of Italy, revealed in the stories of the Borgias, in that astounding piece of autobiography, the Life of Benvenuto Cellini. It was the age, as a French writer puts it, " of the passions armed with principles," of the rehabilitation of the flesh. The world had grown tired of the morbid spiritual falsetto to mediævalism, and for a change turned to the grunt of the sty—the one as far removed as the other from the true, full human note.

The world has not yet recovered from that clash of extremes. France in particular has continued the tradition of Rabelais and of Villon. The philosophers, the *beaux esprits* of the eighteenth century, strove to stifle the utterance of the heart's pieties. Their note was materialism and the cult of the senses. Thus we have Mme. du Châtelet, the cultured mistress of Voltaire, saying, " We have nothing else to do in the world but to obtain agreeable sensations and sentiments " ; and de Chaulieu's idea that, " if the reason preserves its place, everything is permitted," and that *la volupté* is " the art of using pleasures with delicacy and to taste them with sentiment." The

revolution which followed was accordingly one against religion as much as against the monarchy. Lamennais, in a later age, finely said that " man is torn between two worlds, the finite and the infinite." The revolution, on the contrary, was an attempt to plant man's two feet on the visible earth and to ignore all other. Death was an eternal sleep. As Renan puts it, " France has never been convinced of the vanity of this world. . . . The French mind is in most perfect harmony with the dimensions of this planet."

This is to-day the spirit of Continental Socialism and of much Socialism that is English. The Church may well ask how it is that vast masses of intelligent toilers have excluded its doctrines from their programme. The fact remains that they have excluded them. The Socialist indictment is that the ecclesiastics have put everything into metaphysics and ignored the real human interests. They have preached their dogmas, courted the rich, supported the oppressor, and left the poor to shift for themselves. And they *are* shifting for themselves—after a fashion, not the best fashion. They will discover in the end that redistributions of property, a bread-and-butter programme, a full stomach, in short, though important parts of life, are by no means the whole ; that these satisfactions are only the beginning ; that man cannot live by bread alone. But what shall we say of the blindness, of the sheer ineptitude of a Church that has allowed the multitude to reach such solutions ; that has gone on piping its weak falsetto away in the heights, while the answering voice from beneath was first a groan and then a scoff ! It is in the recovering by Chris-

tianity of its full human note that it can hope to regain its lost ground ; that our world, so out of joint, can return to wholesome conditions.

The Church, in its course through the ages, has had indeed a curious faculty for losing its proper note. The mischief began early. Let anyone compare the note of the Palestinian Gospel with that of the Athanasian Creed ; with the whole array of fourth-century dogmas. Can this, we ask, be the same music ? Can these dry quiddities ; this metaphysical jargon of essence and substance, of homoousios and homoiousios ; this catena of arid propositions from which every particle of human feeling has been squeezed out ; this barren realm of Greek dialectic, girt around with a *chevaux de frise* of menaces, have any affinity with, any possible derivation from, the gracious story of the Son of Man ? It is the humanness of the Gospels that constitutes their eternal charm. It is the Church's attempt to dehumanise them that has done the world the greatest possible disservice. It is when we realise Christ as human through and through that we see in Him the hope of the world. In Him we see, then, the capacity of man to be divine ; can say with Athanasius, " He became human that man might become divine."

The Church, we say, will have to come back from Nicæa and Chalcedon to Palestine ; will have to withdraw its emphasis from outworn metaphysics to the deep humanities of Jesus. Under that inspiration she will restore the balance of man ; will bring back to humanity its full note. On the one side she will labour unceasingly for the redress of evil conditions, for the restoration of justice as between one

class and another ; for the securing to every man his sure place on the earth, his human rights. On the other side she will teach him his upper notes ; that until the spiritual fills and possesses him he has not reached his proper level ; that he is only man when he is the temple of God.

But here, in discussing the place and teaching of the Church, we come upon another element of the human note. The Church's teaching has been an affair of teachers, and especially of some pre-eminent ones. And now emerges for us a doctrine of limitations. The doctrine is that no one man carries in him the whole note. For everyone man is an affair of his own time, of his mental capacity, of his past, his upbringing, of the traditions in which he was nurtured. And so we have to separate from him what was of the eternal and what was temporary and evanescent. Take, for instance, the teacher who has shaped for us so much of our Christian conceptions. We shall never get our best from St. Paul until we have properly guarded ourselves from his limitations. We can never think entirely as the apostle did simply because we can by no effort put ourselves back into his time or his personality. His Jewish birth, his rabbinical education, the pressure upon him of the Jewish law, the conditioning of his thought by the cosmic views of his age ; all these things belong to him and not to us. What we take from him accordingly must be essence and not the form. It was his temporal that was his own ; it is his eternal that is ours. The same thing applies to our other great teachers, to Luther, to Calvin, and the other heroes of the Reformation. You can never think precisely as Luther thought,

because you have never had anything like his upbringing. You cannot enter into the precise feeling which shaped his doctrine of justification, because you have not had upon you the burden of that Romanist way of salvation in which he sought peace and found it not. His age and environment were one thing, ours another. And thus, while he inspires he must not dominate us. Our total humanity has other notes which he does not supply.

The human note, is, in this way, a limitation of the individual teacher; and yet no teacher can do without it. It is the salvation of the sermon. The preacher who draws men is he who sounds the deeps of the human heart; who knows its trouble, its burden, its infinite aspiration. To be complete he must know its full compass. He will preach the Bible because he finds there the utmost heights and lowest depths of what man has felt and experienced. And he will preach the age in which he lives, with all the new tones that have come into it. He will give back the echoes not only of the general soul, "the still, sad music of humanity," but also of the hearts that are before him; what he has learned from their tragedy, their victory, the miracles of healing in separate lives. The preacher who is also pastor; who, as part of his pulpit preparation, has placed himself in sympathy and helpfulness by the side of his brother; who has had confided to him the secret of his suffering and of his temptation; who has wrestled with another man's sin; who has carried all this into his meditation, and into his prayer, will find here a source of inspiration that will never fail; a power over the hearts he speaks to that none will resist. The great preachers, from Chrysostom to Beecher,

steeped themselves in the hearts of men. Their word was living, for it dealt with life.

The human note, taken in its wholeness, is a good note. It must be, for the Divine is in it and at the back of it. To gain it you must listen not to the chatter of courts, to the cynicisms of a *blasé* society, but to the utterances of simple, lowly people. Tolstoy, who passed his earlier years in courts and camps, found life's true ring by intercourse with the peasantry of his country. Says he :

"When I once really entered into the life of humanity I became convinced that despair cannot be the destiny of man, and that people have lived and are now living by faith. I saw around me people who, having this faith, derived from it an idea of life that gave them strength to live and strength to die in peace and in joy."

And thus it is that religion is eternal. Its strength is not in creeds, or temples, or Church establishments, but in the heart of man. The oldest utterances in the world are religious utterances ; and we may be sure that its latest will be also religious. For the human note is an infinite note, the voice of a being made for God, and indwelt by God. As Augustine says, "Dig deep enough into man and you will find the Divine."

XXIX

OF SOME SURVIVALS

THERE are few things more interesting than the study of the world's survivals. They are at once the history of its past, and the prophecy of its future. Some of these survivals are growing from more to more; some are visibly decaying. Many things that were very much alive are now dead. Only their corpses or their tombs survive. Of others we have to say that while their souls are living, their bodies, their outward expressions are dying, or are at least undergoing vital changes. Life, as we know it, carries always within itself the remains of a past life. Our bodies, for instance, are, amongst other things, a museum of antiquities. They are eloquent of the road we have travelled. What is the meaning of our caudal vertebræ? They are survivals of the period when our ancestors were ornamented with tails. Biologists speak of the remains of gills in the neck, remnants of the time when, in our pre-human stage, we lived in the sea. We talk of the Sphinx, of the Pyramids, as relics of an immense past. They are of yesterday as compared with the relics we carry in ourselves. Wherever we look we see signs of eternal change, of eternal movement. Nothing seems stable except instability. In the onward march the strongest things weaken and die. Their remains stand out as milestones to show the distance we have travelled.

And this, which is true of our natural history, is true also of our social and our religious history. To note here what is growing and what is decaying, what has the promise of the future, and what is shrivelling into extinction—than this there is no more vital, and, we will say, no more hopeful study. There are things to-day in our social and our spiritual condition—institutions, customs, habits of thinking —whose enormous bulk fills the horizon, whose strength seems impregnable. And there are others which are weak and puny, struggling for existence. But the question here is not at all of relative size or mass. The entire question is one of development or decline. The institution which at present fills the eye may be, after all, only a row of kidney beans. The tiny shoot appearing above the ground may be an acorn's sprout, on its way to be the oak of centuries. It will make all the difference to us which side we are on.

With these things in mind, let us look now at the conditions of our world to-day, and see if we can discriminate between the oaks and the kidney beans. Is it not significant, to begin with, to see the direction which the human movement, through all these ages, has been taking? If the universe were an affair of chance, with no thought or moral purpose directing it, we could imagine all sorts of ends to its movement. There would be no reason why it should move at all; or, if it did, that it should not be a progress from bad to worse. We might see man becoming more cruel, more barbarous, more ignorant than before. How strange that the exact contrary has happened! That fact is indubitable. As we look back, we see the difference

between the good and the bad in society is not only in their moral value, but in the fact that the one is the growing thing, and the other the decaying one. What has become of the earlier cruelty? It has left scarcely a monument behind. Think of the Roman age. At the fall of Jerusalem Titus crucified tens of thousands of the conquered Jews. Cicero, in a letter to Marcus Marius, tells him of some public games he had just witnessed. He says:

"The games were magnificent. But, after all, how can a person of any refinement enjoy seeing a helpless man torn by a wild beast of enormous strength? . . There was nothing new to me in all I saw."

Cicero was a more than usually humane man for a Roman, but even he saw nothing in these horrible spectacles but a lack of good taste. The scene bored more than it disgusted him. Ages after, Mary of Lorraine, looking from the Castle at Edinburgh at some heaps of corpses, slaughtered by her orders, thought it "a gay sight." In the civilised world there is no survival of these emotions. There is still enough hatred, but it does not express itself that way. The old brutality is a dying force. It weakens hour by hour.

Take, as a further illustration, one of the world's first class hatreds, that of the *odium theologicum*—in plain English, theological hate. We know how that has expressed itself in earlier times. Its story is that of the Inquisition, of the torture chamber, of the rack. Queen Mary said she burnt heretics because God would burn them in hell. To day there is an attenuated survival of that old fury, a survival in the shape of social ostracism, of harsh words, and bad feeling. There is still persecution, a mild one, but yet a persecution, for believing contrary to the

fashion. But it is a decaying power, decaying because of the new life and light that are coming.

To tell a man to believe or disbelieve at his peril; to threaten him into acceptance, either by suggestion of racks and thumb-screws, or of hell fire in the future, is not only an infamy, it is an absurdity. You may thereby compel his fear. You cannot compel his faith. And precisely because we are learning here to understand the mental laws, the old religious hatreds are doomed. They will be seen to be such a waste of good emotion. It will be as ridiculous to abuse a man for doubting a supposed historical fact for which you can bring no proper evidence, as for abusing his disbelief that two and two make five. In the future none will seek to persuade his fellow except by the truth of facts, and the truth of the spiritual instincts.

We have spoken of survivals where the soul of a thing lives, while its body, its outward expression is changed and metamorphosed. That we see everywhere going on, and it is one of the finest features of the time. As a good example of what we mean, let us take patriotism. There is no harm, there is much good in patriotism taken by itself. The love of one's country is next to the love of one's home, and there is never any harm in true love wherever it makes its habitation. There is nothing but good where this love finds expression in labouring for one's country, in seeking the best things for it, in striving to lift it to its highest, in suffering for it with heroism and quenchless hope when its hour is darkest. But there are forms of patriotism which are survivals, with, happily, nothing but decay before them. That is the patriotism which, of old, taught the Greeks to call

all outsiders barbarians, to whom no justice need be observed, no mercy shown. It is the patriotism which to-day exhibits itself in hatred and contempt of the foreigner ; which calls for armaments to overawe or crush him ; which refuses to acknowledge any excellence, any wisdom which is not insular ; which would raise the wall of hostile tariffs as high as the wall of its own prejudice ; a patriotism born of hatred rather than of love. But that, we say again, is a survival that will not live. It is contrary to the spiritual consciousness, to the laws of the soul. The patriotism that will survive is the patriotism that, beginning in love, will go on in love ; that will raise its own country that thereby it may the better help other countries ; that will seek its own best, that it may thereby procure the best for every creature. The soul here is greater than the old body which it is casting off. It will by and by obtain the body that fits it.

We cannot understand anyone pursuing this study of survivals without finding himself filled with a glorious optimism. For it brings us upon the finest fact in the world. What do we see ? That the things which are going out are the bad ones, and the things which are coming on are the good ones. War is going, cruelty is going, the cult of falsehoods is going. But see what is coming ! Right amid the ages of violence, the ferocious barbarism of ancient man, in the very midst of all this, there appeared the tender plant of the spiritual culture. There grew in some elect hearts and minds the sense of love, of brotherhood, of purity, of righteousness, of eternal justice. There they were, faint and feeble ideas, unclad, unarmed, with no battalions as their allies, no strength

from sword and gun. In their nakedness these ideas were set upon, battered, bruised, trampled under the iron forces of the world. The men who held them were unarmed ; had nothing to fight with but their souls. And yet amid all the wars and tumults, amid all the wrecks and catastrophes, these things have survived ; are here to-day, growing from more to more, their prospect secure, their victory certain. This is not rhetoric ; it is the simple fact, for anyone to see who will look.

And these ideas and forces, embodied in saintly and inspired souls ; developed into institutions, expressed in sacred literatures, and ever being wrought upon and reinforced by the overbrooding Spirit—all this is what we know as religion. Religion is, and ever will be, the great survival. It has its times of pause, of reconstruction, of turning back from outer conquest to an inner purification. And such a time is upon us now. On this phase the words of two distinguished thinkers, both outside the orthodox organisations, are very noteworthy. Says Frederic Harrison :

"All our mighty achievements are being hampered and often neutralised ; . . . all our social diseases are being aggravated by this supreme and dominant fact—that we have suffered our religion to slide from us. . . The urgent task of our time is to recover a religious faith as a basis of life, both personal and social."

And says Lord Morley :

"Religion, whatever destinies may be in store for it, is at least for the present hardly any longer an organic power. It is not that supreme, penetrating, controlling, decisive part of a man's life which it has been, and will be again."

The situation here pictured is of a time which is already passing, while the prophecy is coming to its

fulfilment. Religion, ridding itself of its illusions, founding itself anew on the facts of man's spiritual nature and destiny, claiming for itself all the true as well as all the good—pausing for a time, though it may be now, as often before, that it may better realise itself—is as safe, as abiding in its possession, as the eternity to which it belongs.

The greatest of all questions of survival is that of the survival of man after death. The usual argument here has been that of the distinction between matter and spirit. But here a counter argument has to be noted. The difference between matter and spirit is intrinsically as great in the soul of a beetle as in the soul of a man. Both are invisible, intangible, unweighable, possessing none of the qualities of matter. If, then, on this ground, you argue for the survival of man, what of your beetle? The argument does not trouble us. Everybody, materialists and idealists alike, believe in the indestructibility of matter. You may change it infinitely, but annihilate it never. If that is true of matter, be sure it is of spirit. The change here will be according to the laws of spirit. The beetle's soul will not be destroyed any more than its body. But its change, its future, will be according to the size and quality of its soul. That will find its place somewhere. The change in the man's soul will also be according to its size and quality. And that is exactly what religion has taught from the beginning.

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